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Cathy's carefree cruise is turned into a tour of duty—complicated by too many beaux.

SHIP'S NURSE

Rosie M. Banks

Love at first sight

Young Dr. Jones looked at the new volunteer nurse and thought: "I have changed, completely changed, my idea of what my wife will look like. She is going to have violet eyes and an oval face, and light golden hair will fall to her shoulders. She will have a soft smile that is almost a grin and she shall have pink lips. And I am nuts!"

Somebody broke an ankle. Someone had a serious case of ulcers. But young Dr. Jones diagnosed his own problems as love at first sight.

He looked at Cathy and said to himself: "Perhaps she would like to be a doctor's wife—even mine!"

SHIP'S NURSE
is a PERMABOOK original.

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SHIP'S NURSE

ROSIE M. BANKS

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Ship's Nurse

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SHIP'S NURSE

CHAPTER 1

There she was.

She was tall and slim. But voluptuous. She had curves that caught the eye and excited envy. She was proud and aloof, and yet she was friendly.

She wasn't a girl. She was a ship.

The S.S. *Gloriana,* the pride of her line.

Cathy Jerrold gasped when she saw her. She had, of course, seen pictures of her, but she had never seen her in actuality, and she was almost breathless as the taxi stopped at the pier on the Hudson River and

that incredibly graceful high prow loomed over them.

"Oh, Aunt Mary," Cathy finally cried. "It's so much more beautiful than anything I ever imagined. What a wonderful vacation we are going to have. If only," she added ruefully, "you didn't have to work on this trip, and I could see more of you."

Mary Jerrold smiled affectionately at her beautiful niece and the honesty which shone from her extraordinary violet eyes. Mary, until a few years ago, had been one of the senior nurses at Apdorpf, one of the most progressive and fabulous hospitals in Manhattan. She was a stout, grizzled spinster in her early sixties, but she had the plump face of a Fra Angelico angel.

She was beloved at the hospital. Many of the interns who years ago had gone to her for advice were now heads of their departments, but they still sought her counsel and wisdom. There had been consternation when Nurse Jerrold announced she was quitting the hospital, but everybody knew there was no use in trying to change her mind, so they did the next best—they gave her a testimonial dinner. There had been tears in her eyes when she spoke to the guests—there were more than a hundred—in a fancy white and gold private room in the Waldorf-Astoria.

The Waldorf-Astoria, of all places, where she had hardly ever dared go for fear of the prices. But Dr. Hal Meikeljohn, one of the heads of the hospital, had insisted. "You wouldn't want another hospital in town to say we gave a shabby farewell to our favorite nurse, would you?"

That did it.

So at the dinner she made her choked-up speech. How she had been at the hospital a long time now ("Why, at my age, a fifty-year-old is beginning to look like a youngster!"); how she had seen the building of the cancer research wing, the Marcia Meikeljohn Pavilion (There

was a curious story there, but she did not touch upon it.*); the improvements on the Apdorpf Pavilion itself; the building of the new School of Nursing; the heart research, open-heart operations and so on....

"But," she went on, "the work has been getting harder for me, and I should make room for some of you younger ones. I have always loved ocean travel and I am shipping—I think that is the proper nautical term—on the S. S. *Gloriana* as head nurse. They think the work is hard, but they don't know what we do at Apdorpf. Don't think you won't be seeing me every time we dock in New York. And whenever any of you gets a vacation, you know what ship to take. We'll give you Apdorpf treatment if you need it, but I hope you won't.

"God bless you," she had said through eyes now so misted that it was as if she were seeing the gilt room from under water. "Thank you, and I'll see you on the *Gloriana.*"

She blew them all a kiss, but there was only one face she saw clearly. The golden-framed, oval face of her niece, Cathy, who was sitting just below the speaker's table. Cathy, to whom she had been like a mother ever since her sister-in-law had died when her daughter was still a child. She had given Cathy a special nod.

The *Gloriana.* It brought her back.

The taxi was inching along the pier to the gangplank. There was the funny, not unpleasant smell of garbage which seemed to consist mostly of fruit. But the air was crisp and cold, and it was exciting. The longshoremen were loading things with zest and good humor—they hadn't been on strike for a number of months, and that made them feel good—and porters were actually vying to pick up luggage. Everything seemed to be in ordered confusion.

* See 6057 *Surgical Nurse,* by Rosie M. Banks, Pocket Books, Inc., 1959.

"Ah, yes," Mary Jerrold said to her niece, picking up her last remark, "we'll have a good vacation. I told you what the rule book says—'Nurses will tend to their professional duties but are never to consort socially with the passengers off hours.' Don't you love that word *consort*? But an old hand like me knows a thing or two and we'll see one another, don't you worry about that. And anyhow this trip might be different."

The trip indeed was to be different. The *Gloriana,* for the first time in her life, had been taken off her regular transatlantic crossing to make a de luxe cruise to Bermuda and back. Nurse Mary had persuaded her niece to come along as a passenger and get away for a brief time from blustery, wintry New York.

"Yes," she repeated as finally the taxi reached the pier's magic portals and a porter, respectful toward Mary but grinning at Cathy, opened the door and reached for their suitcases, "we'll have a wonderful vacation."

She was wrong.

Cathy's cabin was on the main deck. It was a lovely room with a wall-to-wall sea-green carpet and a large bureau which could also serve as a desk. She had her own shower and a large rectangular porthole which looked more like a window—for portholes, Cathy thought, should be round—but which you couldn't open. It was also air-conditioned.

There was a colored lithograph on the wall (She couldn't bring herself even to think *bulkhead,* though she knew that was the proper word aboard.) of a Dutch landscape complete with windmill, tulips and peasant women in sabots and large flaring white headdresses. And why Holland, Cathy wondered, for the *Gloriana* never went to Rotterdam.

But then it didn't go to Bermuda either, but it was this time.

"I'll pick you up in about a half hour," Aunt Mary had said. "I'm not on duty this sailing, but I have a few things to do. I want to drop in on Dr. Crowther to tell him I'm aboard, but I'll take you along. You're to be seated at his table. But we'll only stay a minute. Sailings are busy days, and we mustn't take his time. Sailings make him nervous, and I can't say I blame him. But you're going to like him."

Cathy happily started unpacking.

In his office, which was also on the main deck, Dr. Milton Crowther was seated at his desk. He was indeed nervous and therefore somewhat irritable. He had taken a tranquilizer in the morning, but it was only, as he well knew, a gesture. It never seemed to help.

At his side was a small, tableclothed table bearing a pot of tea and a bowl of ice. Dr. Crowther occasionally sipped from a glass of iced tea. Nobody, he thought, but himself knew that the glass was plentifully laced with a special and very strong Haitian rum which a friend of his, the owner of a hotel down there, sent him regularly.

Sailings *were* difficult. There were literally thousands of persons milling about the ship. The crew below, handling the heavy stuff, the cargo and the passengers' trunks and automobiles and whatever. Any minute there could be a broken leg or arm. The crew above, handling more suitcases than they could easily manage, seeing passengers to their quarters. Any minute an accident could happen to them or to one of the passengers.

And the visitors, the *visitors!* Always a thousand and more of them and all determined to make of the departure a gala occasion. The toasts and the backslapping and the jokes. And while they were aboard, they were Dr. Crowther's responsibility. There could be stow-

aways, and he'd have to take care of them. Or psychopaths who might do anything.

Doctors ashore were inclined to look down on ships' doctors. "A cushy job," they said. And yet here was he, Milton Crowther, responsible for the safety, the well-being, the care of maybe four thousand persons. More than the population of most towns in the United States. And doctors ashore knew the medical history of most of their patients. But not he. He was in a perpetual emergency ward.

He had to be everything. He couldn't be like one of those rich Park Avenue or Harley Street specialists who handled just one exclusive ailment and if a patient had something else wrong with him, he sent him to a friend who was a specialist in *that* ailment. Cushy job indeed! Like being the only medical officer in an entire city! Dr. Crowther shuddered. He took another sip of tea.

It had, though, not been a bad morning thus far. His young assistant, Lew Jones, was down in the hospital and to him would be referred all minor cases. Dr. Crowther was sitting by his telephone getting reports, but thus far Jones had had nothing that needed Crowther's personal attention. A couple of bashed fingers, a bruised knee... Jones would handle those.

And his office had been singularly free of visitors, though a good deal of the line's brass had come by to say hello. They were out in greater numbers today because the *Gloriana* was making her first cruise trip. How nice for them! He took another sip of tea.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Green had a suite on the upper deck. The living room was furnished in modern American, and it was filled with flowers, buckets of champagne, whiskies and vodka, flowers and friends. Mrs. Green was a good deal older than her husband, who was her third. She loved him, and he loved her money.

"They call me a millionairess," she liked to say, "but, you know we own only one little old oil well, and I have put it in Turo's name so he's the millionaire now, not me. I claim he's the only Italian millionaire in Texas, but he's really an American citizen. He was born in Naples, Italy, not Naples, Florida, *ha, ha,* and his name was Arturo Verdi. That's why I call him Turo. But we had his name legally changed to Green. I couldn't stand being called Verdi—it sounds like a golf course."

She was a little high as she wandered among her guests, a glass of champagne in her hand. She was blond, obese and should not have been drinking.

"Take it easy, *carissima,*" said Turo. "You know your condition." He was slim, elegant and dark, dressed in an immaculately tailored black Italian silk suit, the links in his French cuffs two tiny gold oil drills set with emeralds.

Mrs. Green had given them to him the day she formally transferred ownership of her oil holdings (She had, as a matter of fact, more than "one little old oil well," and everybody knew it.) and he hated them but knew better than not to wear them. He was exactly twenty-nine—the trip to Bermuda was his birthday present and his wife was fifty-three.

She now flushed at his reproof, but she never let herself get angry with him. He was so dear to her, and she was so afraid of losing him. In her more honest moments she permitted herself no illusions about why he had married her.

She had bought him as she might have purchased a ranch, and like a good Texan she had no intention of losing her landed interest. They had made a bargain, and they had both kept to it.

He had never let his eyes stray—to her knowledge. And she, for her part, pampered him with luxuries, coddled him and made him more and more dependent upon

her. She could take that little old oil well away from him any time, and he knew it. It was not an ideal marriage, but it was what each had bought, and in their separate ways they were determined to make a go of it.

"Now, hush your mouth," she said, "you, Turo, and your *carissima.* I get thirsty, and champagne isn't bad for me. But I've had milk besides. Anyhow, if I have to go, I want to go happy. And, sonny boy, when that time comes, I think I'll take you with me. I couldn't bear to think of you with another girl."

The macabre statement caused a lull in the conversation of her guests, and Vinnie Green quickly noticed it. "Come on, come on," she said to the steward who had been assigned to her. "Fill up these glasses; earn your keep. We're going to have a ball. This old ship isn't leaving for another hour or so."

One of the guests knocked over a vase of flowers.

"She's rolling already," Vinnie howled, and everybody laughed and laughed.

In the ship's hospital, which was a couple of decks below Dr. Crowther's office, Dr. Llewellyn Jones was on duty. He was a good-looking, sandy-haired man in his early twenties, and he had just completed his internship in a hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. He had been born on Nantucket Island, and its purple moors and dense fogs and its occasional brilliant sunshine, which made the Atlantic shine like a million star sapphires, were ingrained in him.

He had decided to take this job as a ship's doctor for a couple of years simply because he loved the sea. After that he intended hanging out his shingle on his native Nantucket. He was not a flighty man—indeed, he was very serious—but he wanted a touch of the ocean travel which his ancestors had enjoyed in the early whaling days. He wanted a wife and children, too. But he did

not expect to find the former on the *Gloriana*. For the most part, the passengers seemed too sophisticated to him. He had no dream of some young heiress on a moon-drenched deck, although some young ships' doctors were said to have that primarily in mind. But he would have been less than a human young man if he did not occasionally think that perhaps on *this* trip on the *Gloriana* he might meet his girl.

He would know her instantly—midnight black hair and violet eyes—and she would understand about Nantucket and not chafe at the sacrifices and irrational hours of an island doctor, who is the same as a country doctor except that he is completely surrounded by water.

That was his dream. And his dream girl.

And like Cathy's Aunt Mary, the head nurse, he, too, was wrong.

In the meantime, that is to say, the very present time, he was busy. Nothing serious had happened—just a few bruises among the crew, and this was normal. A few last-minute inoculations to the crew. No passenger had called him, but he had a list of six of them who would bear watching. Their doctors ashore had written in about them. Five of them had cardiac conditions; one, a Mrs. Green of Texas, had an ulcer condition.

But she was flighty, the doctor had warned, and did not always keep to her diet. Try to keep an eye on her, he had asked. The letter had been sent to Dr. Crowther and routed by him to his assistant. In his spidery handwriting he had noted, "Have had Mrs. Green seated at my table."

The excitement of departure was mounting. Even blasé stewards felt it. Young boys in trim, white monkey jackets were running along the corridors banging resonant gongs and calling out, "All visitors please go ashore. All visitors please . . ."

But few passengers paid any heed. The knowledgeable visitor wouldn't think of answering the first call, and sometimes he would compete with others to be the last one off the gangplank. This kind of thing, too, can cause trouble to the ship.

No visitor and therefore not concerned, unpacking and whistling happily in his upper-deck stateroom, Alan Richards smiled as he, too, felt the growing tension. He had reason to smile. He had pulled off a great coup. He glanced at his glass-topped bureau and saw standing there the large leather-encased glass and silver flask without which he never traveled. There were certain times and places when you couldn't get a drink when you needed one. He went over to it, screwed off the silver top which also served as cup, poured himself a drink and toasted his grinning image in the mirror.

Yes, sir, he had pulled off a coup. Some people went to Bermuda to land a fish. He was going in order to land Cathy. And wouldn't she be surprised! She didn't know he was aboard and wouldn't find out until she saw him because he had made his reservation too late to be on the passenger list. He hadn't decided yet on exactly the moment of discovery.

Should he be seated calmly at the doctor's table (Oh, yes, he had found out that was where she was to be and had gotten himself a place there through the purser.) and simply smile at her when she appeared? Or should he meet her earlier, in the reading room perhaps or on one of the decks, and unexpectedly accost her? "Pardon me, miss, haven't we met before?"

This was a good deal. He bowed mockingly to his mirrored reflection and went on with his unpacking.

There was a knock at the door of Cathy's cabin.

"Come in, come in," she cried, happy, confident. She knew who it was, and she thought, *Oh, I long for this*

trip. For Cathy, though she was prepared to face life—had indeed prepared for it—had been waiting out a winter in New York City with no real direction of mind.

It was Aunt Mary, the lovely old grizzled nurse from Apdorpf, who had said, "Come with me on this Bermuda trip. It will help you get perspective. Here in this city, with your looks, you'll just get entangled with no-goods like that Alan Richards, your advertising man."

Alan seemed too flighty for Aunt Mary, who now poked her head into the cabin and said, "Come on, darling. Let's go and say a brief hello to Dr. Crowther. I also want you to meet the purser who'll keep an eye on you and see you have a good time. After that, I'll take you up to the smoking room where you can get delicious sandwiches. The dining room's dull at lunchtime the day of departure. Of course, I'm not supposed to go to the smoking room, but I'm not in uniform yet. They won't even recognize me in my chic going-away civilian clothes. Bargain basement in Union Square. Twenty-two dollars. Pretty good, don't you think?"

A familiar shade of annoyance crossed Cathy's face, as if the sun, blotted for a moment by a stray cloud, had withheld its radiance from her golden head. She hated to hear Aunt Mary talk about money. Cathy's father, Richard, Mary's brother, had plenty of it and would gladly have given Mary as much as she wanted. But save for living in the town house in the East Sixties, where Aunt Mary had brought up Cathy after her mother's death, she would accept nothing.

"I'm beholden enough to that brother of mine," Aunt Mary would say. "He gives me a roof over my head and helping raise you was a privilege and a pleasure—not a chore for which he should feel repayment was necessary. At that, I'm the only nurse I know who lives in a private house. And I'm proud of the money I make as a nurse. And prouder still of being one."

Aunt Mary, like Cathy, was inclined to "go on." Perhaps that was where Cathy caught the habit.

"Your dress looks wonderful. And we'll have sandwiches but not before we pass the Statue of Liberty and see her from the very, very topmost deck. She expects me to wave to her, you know. And now we're off to see the doctor, the wonderful doctor of Oz."

The wonderful doctor of Oz was still sitting solemnly at his office desk in complete control of himself. The iced tea had quieted him. It had not thus far been a bad departure. The first "visitors ashore" gong had sounded, and maybe they would get off with no casualties.

Dr. Crowther was a good doctor and could have been a brilliant one. But he had lost heart for surgery and medicine. In a way, for life itself. He had even—once—thought of taking his own, but trained in a profession dedicated to the saving of lives, he had been unable to do so. It was not religion that had stayed his hand—Dr. Crowther was, at best, only a mildly religious man—but something to do with his Hippocratic oath.

He had lost heart when he was serving in the Pacific on a battleship of the *Iowa* class. The letter, which had reached him in the Philippines, had been from his father-in-law. In clumsy, embarrassed words—what an awful letter for him to have to write, Milton had thought, even as sorrow, like an electric shock, transfixed him—it told him his wife, and with her their son, had died in childbirth.

Milton and she had been married at her insistence just before he was shipped to sea. Crowther took the news of her death badly and in weakness took somewhat to drink. Liquor is not allowed on U.S. Navy ships, but it can be found—particularly by a doctor who has access to it in some cases as a necessity. Milton Crowther used

it as an anodyne—he did not abuse it—but he began to rely upon it.

His record in the Navy remained perfect, but when the war was over, he found he had no taste for land and after a most brief apprenticeship—for his credentials were excellent—found himself the chief medical officer of the *Gloriana.*

He was a small, round, blond, cherubic man with a smiling face. Few people knew of the loneliness, the fatigue and the sorrow which harrowed him. The nurses knew it, and so did the hospital assistants. Nurse Mary Jerrold knew it, and she also knew there was more than tea in the glass of iced tea.

She wished somehow she could straighten him out lest some day some bad luck befall him and his career, such as it was, be ruined. It could be a good career for him, a joyous one. What he needed was a good girl to love and to love him.

He wasn't too old. In his forties. Still a youngster to Nurse Mary. This brooding upon the past was unhealthy and unrealistic. And Mary Jerrold was a realistic woman, as a nurse has to be.

Nurse Mary and her niece walked down the passageway from Cathy's cabin to the doctor's office. There was a hand rail on each side to hang on to when the ship pitched, for despite the famed stabilizers she could pitch and roll when the North Atlantic got stormy. The corridor smelled slightly ammoniac from recent cleansing and was still crowded with porters carrying incredible numbers of suitcases. And they hurried as if they were in some sort of race. Speed was one of the prides of the *Gloriana.*

The door was open to the doctor's office, and Mary breezed in. The doctor was writing at his desk, and when he looked up, he smiled with affection. Nurse Jerrold

was a good woman, a tower of strength upon which he had often relied.

She was inclined to mother him, but he rather liked it and if a twenty-four-hour duty was ever required, Nurse Jerrold would perform it as casually as she would accept a cup of tea. He wished he hadn't thought of tea.

"Welcome, Nurse Jerrold. Welcome, Mary, as I may say in the privacy of this office. Is this young lady the niece you have been telling me about?"

And then he looked fully at Cathy.

Now Dr. Crowther in his service on the *Gloriana* had met beautiful women, had had them grace his table, had danced with them on the night of the captain's ball. There had been actresses of such cool, imperturbable beauty as to seem unbelievable. There had been Italian and French women as predatory as tigers and American heiresses no less challenging but more insolent and reserved. But they had meant nothing to Milton Crowther in his mourning and sorrow. Being with them was the social duty of a ship's doctor, but he avoided it as much as possible. And, of course, he always had the most gracious and incontrovertible excuse. "I am sorry. . . . I have a patient I must attend. . . ."

But now he saw Cathy Jerrold.

As a doctor and diagnostician, he could have described his symptoms in polysyllable medical terms.

But the proper lay term is to say that his heart leaped.

She was dressed in a simple dark-blue dress of impeccable *couture* and around her incredibly slim waist was a wide chartreuse belt of patent leather. There was a voile scarf of the same color at her throat. Her pale, oval face was embraced by her shoulder-length golden hair, and she smiled gently at him. Slim long legs and patrician feet encased in spike-heeled black patent leather pumps . . .

"Yes, Doctor. This is Cathy. Cathy Jerrold."

"Welcome aboard, Miss Jerrold. I am truly glad you are to be at my table. I shan't be there for luncheon and possibly not tonight. The first day out, you know. But now that I've seen you, I shall surely be there more often than is my wont."

The faintest rose of a blush showed on Cathy's cheeks as she answered in stilted fashion, "Thank you for that compliment, Dr. Crowther. I know that being at your table will make the trip all the more enjoyable for me. You see, I am interested in medicine."

"She certainly is," cried Mary happily. "But enough of this chatter. The doctor's got work to do. You can talk medicine later. I'm reporting to work at four, Doctor. In the meantime, I'll show Cathy around the ship." And she bustled out into the passageway, looking backward, proud of the obvious impression her niece had made on the chief doctor.

And then it happened. The unexpected, the unbelievable.

There was a crash that forevermore was to sound like a thunderclap to Cathy's ear, and there was Aunt Mary, lying on the floor, her right ankle at a grotesque angle. She was biting her lips to keep from crying in pain. She had run squarely into one of the porters carrying a load of suitcases, and they had both gone down. Four or five suitcases were scattered idiotically in the passageway.

Curious passengers and visitors gathered in the passageway, keeping a cautious distance, looking at the scene in astonishment. The porter was not hurt. He rose and came to stare at the prone woman in incredulous horror.

"My God, Nurse Jerrold," he said. It was like a prayer.

Dr. Crowther was there in an instant. "A stretcher, Whittaker," he called. Cathy was kneeling, tears in her eyes, cradling her aunt's head.

"It's a bad break. Okay, Whittaker, put it down alongside her."

Nurse Whittaker, who had been in the clinic adjacent to the doctor's office getting her records in order, appeared carrying in one hand the unbelievably light, but strong, aluminum stretcher customarily used on shipboard.

"All right, Jim," the doctor said to the porter. "Give a hand. We'll put her on the table in the clinic."

They gently took her inside, Dr. Crowther supporting the broken ankle with his right hand.

Although she was obviously in great pain, Mary Jerrold had regained her composure. "Doctor, don't do anything to Jim. It was my fault."

"We won't do anything to Jim."

"Oh, Nurse Jerrold," said Jim, "I'm so sorry."

"It was my fault," she snapped. "I backed into you like a landlubber. Never looked where I was going."

Dr. Crowther was cutting off her stocking with surgical scissors. "Jim should have taken more care. We're all here precisely to take care of landlubbers."

"What are you going to do, Doctor?"

"I'm putting a temporary splint on this ankle, which will have to go into a cast. A bad break. Bone's almost through the skin. And then I'm sending you ashore for X rays. There may be other breaks. We have about thirty-five minutes before sailing. Plenty of time. Nurse Whittaker, get me two hospital attendants here on the double."

"I've already called for them, sir."

"Good. Then get me the Mariners' Hospital and . . ."

"Oh, Doctor," Nurse Jerrold called in dismay.

"That's right." He grinned. "I'd forgotten. Get Apdorpf. Tell them who the patient is. Have them send an ambulance pronto."

"Of course," Cathy said, "I'm going ashore with you."

"That you are not," declared Aunt Mary with the authority of one who has brought up a child and has not completely lost that authority even though the child is grown. "I will not have you miss this trip because of this silly accident. Anyway, what good could you do ashore? You think Apdorpf won't take care of me properly? Dr. Crowther here and the others will keep an eye on you for me. Besides," she added slyly, "he is shorthanded now. You might be of help to him."

"Of help?" asked Dr. Crowther, and Nurse Whittaker looked inquiringly, too.

"Oh, yes," said Mary Jerrold airily, "my niece is a registered nurse."

CHAPTER 2

Cathy lay on her bed in her cabin, her eyes inflamed from crying, simply lay there staring at the ceiling. Was it a ceiling, she wondered, in ship's parlance? Probably not, because nothing else seemed usual. Probably a deck, she decided, because the floor was a deck and a ceiling was a floor, too, if you were on the other side of it. With such customary vagaries she tried to distract herself from thinking about Aunt Mary.

She had obeyed Aunt Mary because, as usual, the elderly woman was both logical and correct. There was

nothing she could do for her in New York, and anyway the trip would last only about ten days. Her father would see to it that Aunt Mary had books and flowers and things, and, indeed, the hospital itself could be counted upon to baby her beyond her desires.

The two hospital attendants had shown up and carried her away on the aluminum stretcher. Aunt Mary was obviously in pain, but she smiled and made jokes and waved gaily to Cathy as they took her down the gangplank. And then Cathy had gone back to her cabin.

She saw the ship leave through blurred eyes and, through her square portholes, watched the sides of the ship's pier receding swiftly. How fast they left the berth! It was always a source of wonder to her. But she did not go on the topmost deck and wave at the Statue of Liberty. She lay on her bed and thought about Aunt Mary and about herself and about what would become of her.

It was, of course, Aunt Mary who had persuaded her to take the nursing course at Apdorpf. Cathy's father was a rich man, but Aunt Mary said you shouldn't count on that. She'd treated many a patient who had been rich one day and poor the next and, in any case, women nowadays should have a trade or profession.

"Understand this, young lady, about nursing," Aunt Mary had said. "It is not only one of the most honorable and compassionate of professions, it is one that is always in demand. There are *never* enough nurses. You can be a famous women's magazine editor or the head buyer for a big department store, then one day, bang! You find yourself without a job. The only time a good nurse is without a job is when she doesn't want one!

"I don't want you to waste your time at debutante and post-debutante parties. Sure, I want to see you married and have children, but in fairness to them you should bring them some knowledge other than what the inside of the Twenty-one Club looks like. You may some day

have to nurse them yourself, and you'll be glad you know how."

It was, as usual, good advice. So she had taken her three-year course at Apdorpf and duly been capped, and she had passed her state boards, and now she was a registered nurse, ready to take on a job.

But she didn't know. She had plenty of beaux—too many—and if she married, she would make her husband and her home her job. But perhaps she should join some hospital staff—Apdorpf would take her—for a couple of years and see.

But somehow that seemed temporizing. She'd been running around New York since her graduation, undecided and therefore dissatisfied. She had welcomed the idea of this Bermuda trip. It would give her perspective. She had a premonition that she would make an important decision on the trip or that, perhaps, it would be made for her.

Well, she would see whether she was right. She closed her tired eyes and tried to nap.

She had just dozed off when the telephone at her bedside rang. She reached for it, startled, alarmed. "New York calling Miss Jerrold. Just a moment."

What had happened?

And there was Aunt Mary's voice, bubbling. "Well, it takes more than a few suitcases to hurt your old aunt. Frankly, I was scared I'd broken a hip, but all I have is a bruise on my backside. The ankle is in a cast, and they're keeping me here a few days for observation but mostly, I think, because my old pals want to chat with me. I'm queen of the ball. Now you stop thinking about me and have a good time.

"I didn't have much time to tell you about Doctor Crowther and the ship, but he's a good man, and you give my best love to Lew Jones when you meet him. He's Crowther's assistant, and you'll like him. And there's

bound to be some nice passengers aboard. So go and have fun, and don't worry about me. I'm really okay, but I'm going to hang up. These calls cost like the dickens."

She hadn't even given Cathy a chance to speak.

Now Cathy said, "Oh, Aunt Mary, I'm so glad you're really getting along all right!"

"Yup. Good-by, dear."

Cathy smiled. She could visualize the old queen of Apdorpf being fussed over in her hospital bed, loving it though pretending not to. She smiled, too, at Aunt Mary's insistence upon talking about the excellence of the *Gloriana's* medical staff. The unspoken question was plain: Did you speak to the doctor about lending a hand?

The unspoken admonition was equally plain: A little work won't do you any harm, and you'll have just as good, maybe a better, time. Cathy decided she'd speak to the doctor that evening. In a way she owed it to her aunt. It would make her feel good that one Jerrold had pitched in for another.

She fell soundly asleep, lulled by the slight swaying of the ship, which was a cradle lightly rocked for her slumber, by the hiss of the water as the ship slid through it, by the splattering splash of a wave which occasionally slapped the ship's sides.

In his office Dr. Crowther was brooding. Any moment now he should be making his tour of the ship, inspecting the kitchens and the crews' quarters to assure himself that all was shipshape and clean, for he was also the health officer. But he was putting off the moment.

The fall of Nurse Jerrold had been a shock to him.

It was the upsetting thing, the disastrous thing, he had been expecting all morning. And added to this was the fact that he was not unmindful of how much he relied upon her.

He knew secretly that she could do the job as well as he and that there would never be a moment when she wasn't at the top of her capacities. Such a moment might some day come to him. He shuddered, looked at the photograph of his dead wife upon his desk and took a sip of tea.

There was another problem. Now he had only two nurses where he needed three. There had been no time to get a substitute. Well, they'd have to muddle through, as the English say. It was a short trip. Perhaps nothing would happen.

On an impulse he picked up the telphone and called Cathy.

She had been asleep, but she knew how instantaneously to shake the slumber from her voice, and her greeting was crisp and alive.

"Cathy, I mean Miss Jerrold, this is Milton Crowther."

"Oh, hello, Dr. Crowther. And do call me Cathy."

"We've had a radio from Apdorpf about Nurse Jerrold. She's going to be all right."

"I know. She telephoned."

"Ah, that's good. I didn't want you to worry. It must have been an awful shock for you, I know. Would you like a mild sleeping pill for tonight?"

"Oh, no, thank you," Cathy trilled, "my aunt left me well supplied with everything. But, Doctor—" She hesitated a moment, and he murmured an encouraging, "Yes?"

"Doctor, it's true, you know, that I am an R.N. Just passed the boards a little while ago. I'd—I'd like to volunteer for service."

"Nonsense. You're on this trip for fun, and we're going to see that you have it. We are perfectly capable of handling things here."

"Oh, I didn't mean that. I'm sure you can. But it

means the nurses have to take twelve-hour shifts, and they're brutal, I know. I can take a shift, Dr. Crowther, and still have fun. I wish you'd let me."

"That's very generous and kind of you. Let me think it over. Meanwhile take it easy, and meet some of your fellow passengers. Take a walk around the deck, too. There's a slight possibility we may run into a small storm during the voyage, so take it while you can. We won't decide anything today. Good-by now."

What a wonderful girl she was. What a wonderful, beautiful girl. He looked at the photograph of his wife. She wouldn't mind it, he thought. She would want it. And then he thought: *What a fool I am; what a fool. I'm twice her age. She probably thinks of me as old Dr. Crowther. And she looks as if she were rich—what would she want with someone like me? Wonder how she happened to become a nurse. A girl like that doesn't usually. Her aunt, probably . . .*

The reveries were broken by the telephone bell. "Dr. Crowther here."

"Oh, Doctor. This is Cathy again. I've just thought of the silliest thing. Uniforms. I haven't any."

"Oh, that would be no problem. But remember we haven't taken you on yet. Now get out of that cabin and circulate. Any doctor will tell you that circulation's good for you."

In that minute he decided to take her on. That way he could see her, talk to her, be lost, drowned in her wondrous beauty. Otherwise he could admire her from afar in the noisy anonymity of a cocktail party or of his own dinner table.

Yes, he thought, the *Gloriana,* on its first trip to Bermuda, would have its first volunteer nurse aboard. He drained off his tea, squared his shoulders and went below to pick up his assistant, Llewellyn Jones, and make his inspection tour.

Cathy did go to the upper deck. The winter air was chilly but the westering sun on the port side gave it a blush of warmth. She saw a destroyer about halfway to the horizon, tearing through the water going the opposite way, headed for New York.

The seas, which seemed mild to the big *Gloriana,* seemed enormous to it. White spray fountained over its bow, and it seemed to rise at a forty-five-degree angle. But it shook itself like a terrier and kept lunging ahead. A brave and exciting sight. *I wonder,* she thought, *if I'd be seasick if I were on that?*

She was leaning on the deck rail, bemused and now at peace. She was wearing a bluish-heather skirt, a blue cashmere sweater, and perched on her head was a dark-blue Basque beret she had once bought in Saint-Jean-de-Luz. She looked, as she so often did, utterly delightful.

Alan Richards thought so. He had spotted her, dreaming with her elbows on the deck rail and her chin cupped by her bare, white fists. He saw her, a pale blue against the sky's grayish blue and the sea's dark cobalt, which was everywhere flecked with the patternless but insistent white of the spume of the waves as they rose like dolphins and splashed down upon the surface of the sea.

He followed her from a distance until she had, so to speak, come to rest. Now was the moment he had been hoping for. The moment of surprise. And the prelude to conquest.

Alan Richards was the kind of handsome young man of whom people said, "He's a good guy but—" The *but* meant that at heart he was a dilettante. He was, as one of his bridge-playing friends had put it, not really a Jack-of-all-trades but rather a six of clubs of all trades, the six of that suit rarely being of much use in the game.

He could sketch a little; he could versify facilely; and he had occasional good ideas for advertising campaigns, but he would never follow them up with the pedestrian

work it takes to make a good idea successful. He owed his present job to an uncle who had made a fortune in the manufacture of a very low-calorie candy and who had vowed to "make a man" of him, while secretly envying the insouciance which he, the uncle, had never been able to afford.

Alan's father had left him a comfortable amount of money, and his widowed mother—who now lived in a villa in Florence, Italy, where she carried on harmless flirtations with any man who had a title and who managed to build up a fairly respectable free-loading *salon* —also sent him a regular allowance. It could not altogether be held against Alan if sometimes he thought not that the world was his oyster but that he was the pearl within it.

The minute he had seen Cathy alone on the windswept upper deck, he had stalked her as a hunter stalks his prey. Now she was still. Now he would move in.

To carry the hunting simile a little further—and indeed to twist it—Alan, like a male bird wooing his intended, had not neglected his plumage. He was clad in velvet-soft brown leather loafers, which his mother had brought him from Gucci's in Florence, and was wearing slate-gray Daks, which he had bought at Simpson's in London, and his jacket was an extremely subdued and unidentifiable plaid from Edinburgh.

He was a man to catch the eye and, with a confident and rather appealing gaiety, knew it. He wanted to look his best, because he wanted to marry Cathy. And looking his best, he somehow thought would help. That was the trouble with the depth of Alan's superficiality. Cathy, when he spoke to her, never noticed the plumage.

There are many ways a swain may address his girl, but Alan undoubtedly chose the most simple. He sidled next to her, leaned, too, upon the rail, cupped his chin in his

hands, stared at the now diminishing destroyer which still entranced Cathy and said, "Hello."

Cathy, startled, jumped. "Alan!" she cried. "How on earth—"

"Not on earth. On sea," he said and took her in his arms and kissed her expertly and intimately on the mouth.

Cathy responded involuntarily at first and then, it must be recorded, with enthusiasm. Not only was the kiss a vibrant and delightful titillation, but Cathy had been feeling lonely with Aunt Mary gone and this huge liner with Lord knew how many passengers, not one of whom she knew. And now here was Alan who could be depended upon to be amusing and attentive if she didn't allow him to become too serious.

It occurred to her that she had never kissed Alan this way before, though many a time he had tried. But this would be the last. A shipboard romance is an excellent thing for a woman, but it must not be with Alan. He would want to pursue it ashore, and that would never do. This spontaneous kiss, bred of loneliness and the happiness of seeing a familiar face, was all right. But it must not become habit-forming.

Any girl who has kissed a man knows that myriad thoughts, each distinct, may swirl through her head. Though they may take long to relate, they take a second, less than a second, to occur. Each is present, each is separate, yet all are entwined. But no more, no more, Cathy admonished herself, as gently she unentwined herself.

"All right, Alan. Not on earth but asea. What are you doing here? I thought you were working hard at that advertising agency thinking up ways to make us all eat your uncle's candy so we'll stay thin."

Cathy was not vain, but she would have been less than feminine had she not glanced fleetingly at that moment at her lovely lissome figure and thought that if, in-

deed, she liked candy, she could eat candy with *real* calories and not gain weight. The thought was a small moment of self-appraisal and approval. It was a rare thing in Cathy to take any pride in her physical appearance. But she *was* feeling lonely.

And she knew that what Alan Richards liked was not *herself* but her *image*. He liked her—and sometimes talked himself into believing he loved her—because she was attractive. He admired and wanted the externals—it would never have suggested itself to him to wonder what went on *inside* that glittering, golden head.

Had he given thought to it he would have assumed, easily and confidently, that she thought as he did—have fun while it lasts. *Carpe diem,* snatch the day—the only Latin phrase he remembered from his brief attendance at a swank preparatory school, and he remembered it because it was so justly his philosophy. He knew she had taken a nursing course, but he had dismissed it as one of those things like Junior Leaguers being Pink Ladies or Nurses' Aides, a gesture of apology for being rich, a gonfalon to the world that you are a person of good will.

A nothing, Alan would think. A check would do more good, help a nurse who really needed the money and leave glowing Cathy free to be bronzed on Italian Rivieras or whipped by the ice-hot winds of Saint-Moritz. How wittily he would scoff if she told him that she had seriously thought of dedicating her life to nursing!

Oh, no, he would say, not those golden tresses wrapped into a bun to fit under a seagull-looking nurse's cap. Not those slim Ferragamo feet in sensible, white shoes; not that figure of yours, which is for Desses or Dior or Bergdorf-Goodman, in a starched, sexless uniform; not—

He would carry on. Alan Richards was superficial.

Cathy was not.

But she was also something else. She was a catalyst—a

substance, the dictionary might say, which can effect change in others without suffering change itself.

She did not know it. Almost always unself-conscious, she had no notion that she wielded a weird, pleasing, complaisant and compelling power. To look at Cathy, in other words, was to react. Without realizing it, she was, on this brief Bermuda cruise, to change the lives of two doctors, at least one nurse, an advertising man named Alan Richards and even a deckboy and porter named Jim.

Just now the advertising man was looking at her admiringly. He had not answered her question. He was leaning his back against the ship's rail, against the pale-yellow, wintry, sinking sun.

Cathy repeated, "What are you doing here?"

He responded glibly, "I came here to woo you. To sweep you off your feet, as the saying goes. To persuade you to become Mrs. Richards. To cherish and adore you and to keep a smile forever gracing your pink mouth."

"You have a way with words," Cathy said lightly, "but you should save it for your advertising copy. You are wasting them on me, my lad."

"Oh, no, I'm not. You'll see. I even thought that we could get the captain to marry us and then this trip would be our honeymoon."

"Oh, Alan, stop it. Does anybody ever take you seriously? Actually you *should* marry some nice girl. It might settle you down. Some nice girl, I said. Not me."

"Aren't you nice?"

She smiled but ignored the question. "Did you know I was to be on this cruise?"

"Certainly."

"And you just walked away from your job to come on this trip and, if what you say is true, which I doubt, to pursue a fool's errand?"

"There are other ways of putting it. I had struck

a pleasant hiatus in my job, and besides I had some vacation coming."

"I doubt it. You never stay at a job long enough to earn a vacation. I love you dearly—you are amusing and thoughtful, but you are as irresponsible as a puppy. Why don't you settle down? And for the record, I'm not going to marry you. Ever. And you know it."

"I do not know it. Where's your Aunt Mary?"

She told him.

"Now understand this," he said soberly and quietly for him, "I like your aunt. I'm very fond of her in fact, despite her extraordinary myopia about my charms and suitability for a niece whom she does not wish to let off the leash. And I'm glad that the break wasn't too serious. But there is sunshine after rain, and the sunshine is me. Without your aunt's forbidding presence, I shall be able to press my suit all the more successfully. And I'm going to press it."

"You sound like a tailor," Cathy said.

"That is unworthy of you. Look, the sun is almost gone. Indicated is a cocktail. May I offer you a cocktail?"

"Yes, thank you. I am a little chilly."

"We shall endeavor to warm you up."

They went into the smoking room where the steward greeted him cordially and by name. Alan ordered Gibsons without asking Cathy. "The occasion simply cries out for a Gibson," he explained.

"I rarely drink them. They're likely to make me giddy."

"That's good. We want you giddy."

The steward brought them their drinks. They were the color of spun white gold and nestling at the bottom of each stem glass were two tiny, nacreous pickled onions. Cathy sipped hers and thought that Alan had been right. It did seem the perfect drink for the moment.

Alan was usually right in matters like these, but Cathy wanted more from a husband than an ability to order the right drink and food. Or to be spoken to with respectful familiarity by stewards and headwaiters all over the ships of the Atlantic Ocean and the countries that border the western side of Europe.

If, as a matter of fact, she thought suddenly and amusedly, she should say to him that she would accept his offer and indeed marry him—why, Cathy inwardly giggled, he'd be so scared he'd run away and hide.

The smoking room to which Alan had taken her for her cocktail was a beautifully designed room. It was made to make men feel that they were at home in one of those spectacular men's clubs in Pittsburgh or Chicago or New York. Or perhaps San Francisco. Stolidity with gaiety. Just to walk into it made a man think (particularly if he didn't rate it) he belonged to something pretty special—like the club you cannot join unless your family has belonged for at least four generations.

To women it appealed for an easier reason. It was so male that they all felt—even the most sophisticated—that they were intruding upon a completely masculine preserve. All women like that. It is innocent; it is fun; it, indeed, may be the function of women.

The chairs were leather and very heavy and comfortable. The lighting (the sun had suddenly dropped over the ocean's rim like a quick molten pellet) was discreet and flattering, yet strong enough to light a bridge game that had already started.

On what the interior designer would have called the "focal" wall was a huge and somehow comforting mural of the Atlantic Ocean. It was crisscrossed with longitudinal and latitudinal lines and embellished with smiling dolphins and one spouting whale. It showed, as a frame of reference, the ports to which the ship might go: New

York, Halifax, Le Havre, Southampton, the Azores. Also Bermuda.

The daily positions of important passenger ships at sea were marked by little metal models magnetized to the mural. The *Gloriana's* model had a dry cell battery within her so she always shone uniquely and brightly, her portholes twinkling and one ruby light at her bow showing she was going south and that the full of the Atlantic was to her left.

On the trip home the little glass cup that covered the light would be exchanged for a green one to show that now she was going homeward and northward to New York and the full Atlantic was to her right.

So the room was golden brown and soothing.

And Doctor Llewellyn Jones walked through the room fore to aft, as the sailors would put it. He had a half smile on his face, but it was the professional smile of ships' officers who must always imply that all is well. Dr. Lew Jones was en route to an emergency meeting called by Dr. Crowther. But all *was* well, so far as he knew.

So he strode briskly along the aisle made by the smoking room's heavy, square tables and passed the one where sat Cathy and Alan. Cathy noticed him—confident, young, crew-cut sandy hair and the pale-blue eyes of one who has looked much upon the sea. Cathy saw the caduceus over the two stripes on his sleeve and realized who he was. She flashed him a warm, radiant smile.

Dr. Jones smiled back. It was customary for passengers to smile at ships' officers, and this did not take him aback. What did disconcert him was the beauty of the girl. He broke his stride and hesitated; he wanted to speak to her, to introduce himself. It was a passenger ship's officer's privilege, nay, even his duty. But Dr. Jones merely halted for a moment and did not speak.

There would be time for that later, he assured him-

self. Also he had noticed the smoldering look on Alan's face. That young man would not welcome an interruption. He went on out of the room, and Cathy's eyes followed him thoughtfully.

"So what's so great about him?" Alan asked truculently.

"I don't even know him, but I know who he is. He's Doctor Llewellyn Jones. He's the assistant doctor on the ship, the assistant to Dr. Crowther. A lovely name, Llewellyn. He must be Welsh."

"*Alan* is Scottish. Concentrate on that. I have some relatives there. We could go there and show you off on our honeymoon."

"Stop it, Alan." And then she added slowly, bemusedly, "I may be working with him on this trip."

"You may *what?*"

She told him of her offer to Dr. Crowther.

"This is ridiculous," he said, as she had expected. "You're taking this trip—and it's a short one at that—for fun. You can't tell me that their hospital staff is crippled by the loss of Aunt Mary, valuable though she may be. If it were really important, they would have delayed the sailing and gotten hold of one of their regular substitutes."

"There was no time. There are tides, you know. Time and tide. They wait for no man. Or woman."

"Still it's absurd. They don't need you. And in a way I think you owe it to me to spend your time with me. I came here because of you. Not for the ship on which I have sailed. Not for Bermuda which I have seen."

"I have made the offer, Alan. If they need me, I shall serve."

"Two Gibsons," said Alan to the steward.

"One," said Cathy.

She agreed, after his cocktail had been delivered and he had sulkily drunk it, to meet him back at the smoking

room after they had changed for dinner, so he could escort her to the dining room.

"Where are you sitting?" she asked.

"I've reserved a table for two here at the restaurant. It is quiet. Only about eighty people in all. I thought you'd like it. The main dining room is awfully crowded and noisy."

"Well, dear, that was sweet of you, but I cannot accept. I'm in the main dining room. At the doctor's table."

"Okay, if that's what you want. I have a place at the doctor's table, too."

The advertising man had really planned his campaign.

CHAPTER 3

In their luxurious suite on the upper deck, Vinnie Green was lying on her bed. Turo was fussing around the living room which still showed signs of their farewell party.

"I think I'll have a pill," said Vinnie.

"I'll get it for you. You shouldn't drink so much."

"Nuts to you, brown maiden," called Vinnie gaily. "I'll do what I want to do. Doctors exaggerate. I'm okay. So long as I have you. And I have, haven't I, darling?"

There was an aura of threat in her light, trilling ques-

tion. It pervaded the room like a faint miasmic vapor which may be sniffed but not seen. Turo was conscious of it, and he shuddered.

It was that desperate feeling of being possessed which obsessed Turo. It was his pride which was hurt; it was the shame which he saw reflected in the eyes of the calm, appraising men in Dallas and Fort Worth.

She had said, "I have you," not, he noted, "love you." She had bought him, and he had agreed to the sale. He could have declined. The shame was his—not that of a rich, silly old woman. But his fetters were beginning to chafe. She, fifty-three; he, twenty-nine.

Indeed, not ideal.

He gave her a glass of water and her pill while she smiled at him confidently and always *possessively*.

Unbidden and hateful thoughts entered Turo's head.

Had he not already given her more than two years of happiness? Had he not—but he stopped himself. He was excusing himself for thoughts for which there were no excuses.

But some day, he thought, Vinnie must die. She was sick, and she took no care of herself.

And he would inherit all that fantastic Texas money.

The very imagining of it made Turo feel warm and tender toward her.

Then he'd show them in that horrid little leaning house where he was born that tilted over the Neapolitan port. He could conjure up the smells of fish and ordure right this minute, right in this air-conditioned suite, smelling now a little heady from the perfume of too many flowers.

He would give money to his sisters and the stupid husbands they had wed; he would take care of his mother; and for his uncle, who had given him his first job and actually lent him the money to get to America, oh, he had a present for his uncle. It would be a one

thousand dollar bill, thrown upon the floor so the uncle would have to stoop to pick it up.

That would really repay him for the insults he had endured as a child. "I wouldn't trust you to shine my shoes," his uncle had said. "But you are my sister's child. Have I deserved of God such a cross to bear?"

He would stoop, the uncle, and Turo would drive away in his Chrysler, too big for the narrow streets of the port area where they lived, crowding the wide-eyed, olive-skinned urchins to the side, pressed against the crumbling walls of the old buildings. "Write me if you wish anything. Anything within reason—"

The ship, hissing softly through the water, gave a sudden lurch to port, struck by a wave that had come from nowhere. "Whoops," said Vinnie. "Hope we don't run into a storm. What were you thinking of, Turo? You seemed a mile away."

"Nothing, nothing," said Turo. "Do you want dinner served here or shall we go down?"

"Oh, let's go down. Got to meet the doctor anyhow. And we might as well get to know people. We'll have a ball. I'll take a nap now. Wake me up in a half hour or so."

"Yes, dear. I'll wake you up."

Yes, dear—the phrase of his obeisance.

Dr. Jones walked into Dr. Crowther's office. Seated at each side of the latter were the two nurses, the dark brooding Elise Whittaker and the twittery, blond Florence Knight—innocent-eyed, capable, but one, Dr. Jones had long ago figured out, who could only take orders, never make a decision for herself.

"I hope I'm not late," he said.

Milton Crowther took a sip of iced tea and smiled a welcome. "Sit down," he said. "I have a little speech to make."

Just then another wave slapped the ship shudderingly on the starboard side, causing her to keel over suddenly and surprisingly to the port. Spray splashed against the portholes and dripped downward in erratic beads as the ship, her stabilizers affronted, quickly steadied her.

"Whoops," said Dr. Crowther, greeting the intruder exactly as had Vinnie Green. "That wave may serve as my object lesson. I think we may be in for a touch of weather. And we are shorthanded due to Nurse Jerrold's accident. We may be very busy.

"Now I don't want to impose extra duties on you, and I don't think I shall have to. We are fortunate that on this trip we have Jerrold's niece, who is a registered nurse from Apdorpf, and she has volunteered to give us a hand. I intend to accept her offer for a number of reasons, but first I wanted to discuss the matter with all of you."

"Sounds okay to me," said Lew Jones, "if she knows her business. It would be sort of rough on the two girls here if they have to split twelve-hour shifts. Why not? We could keep an eye on her anyhow, and if she's not up to scratch, why we'll ease her back into the passenger department."

"I think it's real nice of her to volunteer," said Nurse Knight, her blue eyes looking trusting and somewhat stupid.

"So do I," Milton Crowther said. "It's in the best tradition of the sea. You know that all doctors who come aboard always call on me and offer their special services if they can be of use. I am glad that the nurses' corps has the same spirit."

"If I may say so," said Elise Whittaker, "I don't like it. May I speak freely?"

"Pray do," said Dr. Crowther, slipping into his sometimes archaic language and taking a sip of tea because he had guessed opposition from Nurse Whittaker.

Elise Whittaker had observed the mercurial beauty of Nurse Jerrold's niece and had not liked her—on sight. Dr. Crowther, for whom she had a protective interest, had seemed interested. She hadn't liked it, although she was fair enough to admit that it was no fault of the girl, who seemed nice enough, but she was just too damned beautiful.

There was jealousy in her mind as she spoke. "Doctor Crowther, of course anything you decide we will do. But I don't really think that for this trip we need a nurse to take over the duties of Nurse Jerrold. A new nurse won't know routine, won't know personnel. Florence and I can handle it this trip. I suggest shifts of six, six, six and six. That will give us plenty of time for rest and will only add four hours *per diem* to what we usually do. So what—it's a short trip. Why not let the young lady enjoy her trip as a passenger? I'm sure Florence will agree with me."

Florence immediately uttered a small gurgle that could be only taken as assent.

Dr. Crowther had expected this hard demurrer, and agilely he blocked it. "That's very generous of you, Elise," he said, "but I won't have it. We never have had a crisis on this ship, but should one occur, I want my staff in top condition. A twelve-hour shift, no matter how you split it, is too much. I'm going to accept Miss Jerrold's offer."

"Certainly, sir," said Nurse Elise Whittaker. "But might I suggest one more idea? Nurse Jerrold is after all a passenger—why not give her a four-hour shift instead of eight? Florence and I can easily make up the difference. It's sweet of her to want to do it, but I don't feel we should take advantage of her."

"All right," Dr. Crowther said, "we'll give her a four-hour stretch, and you two can decide how you want to split the balance."

"I should think that midnight to four would be best for her," said Nurse Whittaker. "We don't usually have much trouble then, and that would give her the best time of the day and night to herself."

"All right," said Dr. Crowther. "I'll speak to Miss Jerrold tonight or tomorrow morning. Thank you for coming to this meeting. I'm pleased that we have young nurses willing to volunteer like this and, of course, pleased that you both welcome her assistance so generously.

"Miss Jerrold will not go on duty tonight. But I shall speak to her, as I have said, and bring her around to meet you two. Please give her all the help you can."

The two nurses left.

"Why was Whittaker so opposed?" Milton Crowther asked Lew Jones.

"What does Miss Jerrold look like?"

"She's a very beautiful girl. And competent, I should guess."

"Chief," said Dr. Jones, "in some matters you're a dope."

He waved airily and he, too, left.

What had young Lew Jones meant? The image of Cathy Jerrold swam before Dr. Crowther's eyes.

He took a sip of his tea and, strangely, took his wife's picture from his desk into the adjoining bedchamber. *You shouldn't live in the past,* he said to himself. *She'd be the first to tell. And perhaps I shouldn't have a personal photograph in my office. Here it's better. She would approve.*

The very simple reason for Milton Crowther's simple actions was that he was infatuated with Cathy Jerrold. This fact was also the subject of a conversation between the two ship's nurses, Elise Whittaker, black-a-vised, and Florence Knight, blond and dumb. That is to say she was thought of as dumb.

The adjective is relative. She had a boy friend on board the ship, and nobody from the captain to the lowest dishwasher knew it. That could be smart—not dumb. Whichever she was, however, not one of the ship's company would ever have suspected her of harboring a stowaway.

Now she said, "Why were you so against Mary Jerrold's niece lending a hand? I thought it was nice of her. These tourists on this trip aren't seasoned passengers. If we hit a storm or something, we may be busy, and I'd welcome her. I don't want any twelve-hour watch, even if there's extra pay in it. I don't particularly want a ten-hour watch, but I went along with you. What's the matter with Miss Jerrold?"

"Impedance," said Elise Whittaker.

"Impedance? That's a new one to me. They never taught me that at school."

"I have a brother who's with Westinghouse. It's an electrical term. Something to do with automatic resistance . . ." She reached for a dictionary in the hanging shelf on one of the walls of her inside cabin to which she had invited Florence after Dr. Crowther's declaration. "Here it is: 'The apparent resistance or total opposition to current of an alternating-current circuit, consisting of two components . . .' That's it. Miss Cathy Jerrold and I are two components. And I resist her. I'm in total opposition to her."

"It must be nice to have a brother who teaches you words like that," said Florence vaguely. "But why don't you like her? Do you know her?"

"I've seen her. She's beautiful. I think Dr. Crowther is infatuated with her."

"But that would be splendid! The doctor's always brooding about his lost wife. It might be just the right thing for him. Give him new life. You shouldn't live in the past."

"I have seen her, I tell you," said Elise Whittaker crisply, "and she's not the right sort for Doctor Crowther. Not that golden-haired, gilt-edge security. It would only end in making him more unhappy—in making him, frankly, drink more of that iced tea."

"Elise," asked Florence earnestly, "are you in love with Dr. Crowther?"

Elise Whittaker's dark face flushed even darker. "No, I'm not, Florence Knight—ingale. And if you ever suggest such a thing to anybody on this ship, I promise you'll regret it."

The lady doth protest too much, methinks, thought Florence, who could surprise one by the accuracy of her quotations, though she was one who learned by rote.

Aware of the protest, however, and minding her own business—indeed even intent upon it—she said mildly, "I'd never think of suggesting anything like that. You know that, Elise. I'm your friend. I just wondered, that's all. Just between us."

"Well, stop wondering. I'm fond of Dr. Crowther just as you are. I just don't want him to make a fool of himself over Nurse Mary's niece, who happens to be rich and attractive. It would be bad for him. It's our duty to the line," she added smugly and unconvincingly, "to protect him from something like that.

"Now, Florence, suppose you take from noon to six. I'll take six to midnight, and the princess shall have her midnight to four. Then you'll have four to eight, and I'll relieve you at eight until noon. Okay?"

It was okay with Nurse Knight. It had to be okay even if she hadn't liked the schedule, for since Nurse Jerrold's accident, Elise Whittaker was head nurse and had to be obeyed.

"All right," Nurse Whittaker went on. "It's almost six now, so I'll stay on. I have some of Nurse Jerrold's paper work to catch up with.

"And I'm sorry I called you Florence Knightingale. It just slipped out. You know how it is."

"Sure. Sure, I know how it is."

Florence Knightingale. It was such an obvious joke that she was kidded about it all through school. But somehow she had always resented it. It somehow seemed to denigrate her chosen profession, not that she would not have wanted to be a Florence Nightingale herself. But it irritated her.

She had been named for a dearly beloved aunt, Florence Strauss Day. What would the students have done with that, had they known? Her theme song, Knight and Day? It would have haunted her down the aseptic corridors of the nurses' school.

Fortunately they never found out. Florence Knightingale was enough and now forgotten, except sometimes, as in spite, by Elise Whittaker who had been two years ahead of her at school.

Why the spite? Florence Knight suspected that Elise Whittaker was in love with Dr. Crowther.

Why not?

She, Florence, was in love.

And she was on her way to see her man, the man she had just found out was a stowaway.

Being in love was a very natural thing, even if it could occasion a lot of trouble and misery. She wished she could be in love with Dr. Crowther. He didn't seem to present insupportable problems. Tim O'Leary did.

Tim O'Leary, as surely it took little to guess, was an Irishman. He was born in a little, overcrowded flat far east in the Fifties of Manhattan. His mother did washing and cleaning three times a week for some of the rich families that lived in co-operative apartments just around the corner from her.

When she was away, the neighbors took care of her kids. When she was at home, she took care of the kids of the neighbors. So in a way Mrs. O'Leary lived in a co-operative of her own, and in many ways it was a more cheerful one—certainly a more human one—than the exquisitely decorated show places where she labored.

"Now, Mary," an employer would say, "please be careful when you dust that ivory chess set. It's worth thousands, and if you break a piece, it can be repaired, but the set will forever have lost its value." How Mary hated that intricate, delicate, white and red set! She dusted it as if she were dealing with an asp.

"Oh, Mary," another one would cry, "not another Spode plate! Can't you be more careful? Oh, well, never mind, accidents will happen. The help you get nowadays!"

Mary was as careful as she could be, and if they didn't like the help, let them do without it? No, Mary needed the money, needed the recommendation she might get from one of them, so that perhaps she could find work for four or five days a week instead of only three.

"I'd like to tell them that they live in a tenement, too," she would say to her husband, John. "It's in the law. Frank, the cop, told me. All those apartment houses on Fifty-Seventh Street and Park Avenue, they're just tenements like this under the law. I'd like to tell them that. It might bring them down a peg or two."

"Ho," her husband would roar, draining his beer, or, on Saturdays, something stronger, "you sound just like those blathering Socialists that argue with me at the bar. Ha, when I tell Father Murphy you're a Socialist, he'll not be praising you about how good a wife and mother you are."

John O'Leary was a bartender in an old-fashioned saloon on First Avenue that maintained its old-time atmosphere by clinging to gas fixtures and eschewing elec-

tric lights. It was a proper and decent place, and it gave John a good job. What with the money John and Mary brought in, they were able to feed and clothe their multitudinous children, and the parochial school saw to it that they got a good education.

But young Tim O'Leary, ever since he was a child, had been a problem and a rebel. As a young man he wasn't bad—he didn't steal, for instance, though he was always broke. He was just restless, and he loved to fight. If he did not lose his job because of his own restlessness, he lost it because he bashed the nose of his foreman on account of a fancied slight.

He was fast becoming unemployable and a bum, and the worst of it was that he had no desire to change. A bum to Tim O'Leary was a glorious and free creature, a vagabond and a king.

He was certainly a bum when Florence Knight first met him. He was in ragged clothes, but they were surprisingly clean. It appeared that he had a broken nose. He also had a couple of broken knuckles, what turned out to be a sprained wrist and he was unconscious. It turned out that he had no concussion.

He had been brought in to the emergency ward of the hospital where Florence was then working and where she that night had been given the emergency assignment. Tim had conveniently chosen for his fight the pavement directly in front of the ward's entrance, and the noise of the fight had attracted as witnesses a couple of interns as well as Florence.

When Tim's opponent had finally dropped him, he, a burly youth, had waved an airy hand and said to his audience, "He's all yours now, me friends," and disappeared, swaggering down the dusky street.

Florence's heart had bled, and there was the moisture of tears in her eyes as she had witnessed the brutal and,

she was sure, useless fight. They brought Tim in, laid him out on a hospital table and started to work over him.

When he came to, he looked at Florence, shook his head in flirtatious amazement that made him wince and said, "Sure and I must be dead and you're a beautiful angel."

Florence spotted the fakery of the supposed Irish locution right away and answered sternly and professionally, "We're serious here. Don't try phony Irish on us and particularly that oldie. We can spot the real from the false, you know. Now lay still. You may be badly hurt."

He was. It turned out he also had a broken rib.

But Tim was voluble. One of his endearing traits—which should not have been endearing—was that when caught in a deception he immediately admitted it, turning it into a harmless pleasantry.

"Well, nurse," he said, "that phony Irish as you call it has got me many a pleasant moonlight ride on the beach of Waikiki—which for me is off Coney Island."

Had he become irrational? The poor boy, she thought.

"Nurse," he said, now simply and even humbly, "am I badly hurt?"

"You're not in good shape."

"Well, you should see the other guy. He's the one you should be taking care of."

"He walked away under his own steam before we could get to him."

"Oh, no, he didn't. His pals must have dragged him away. There were six of them, you know."

"There were not," she said, angry and knowing she shouldn't argue with a patient. "We had the privilege of seeing your brawl. He beat you fair and square, and maybe that'll teach you a lesson."

But Florence's worthy admonitions went unheeded.

Tim had passed out cold again. Perhaps, Florence thought, he did not want to hear a truth he knew. Perhaps—who knew?

He looked like a bruised angel to her, like one of those stone statues of saints in Italy whose pictures she had seen and whose features had been marred and eroded by time and rain instead of fists.

Who can explain it? It was not that enchanted evening of which Oscar Hammerstein II had written. It was a sordid, ugly evening. But Florence felt she loved this battered but gay man lying, now so very still, on a hospital table.

Tim O'Leary was repaired. But not Nurse Knight. She was stricken. She fell in love with Tim against all reason, all common sense. And he, in his way, fell in love with her, though he was still unwilling to give up his absolute independence, his glorious "bumhood" as he called it.

Florence Knight usually worked those days from eight to four on the afternoon shift. At the nurses' entrance to the hospital Tim would be waiting for her at a few minutes past four, often a single rose in his hand which he had beguiled for free from the hospital florist. He would take her for a cup of coffee or, if he had the money, to dinner.

If he hadn't the money, which was more usually the case, he would unabashedly suggest that they go to her apartment where she could cook something for him. He would kiss her and she would reluctantly, and with abandon, respond. Never did he take advantage of her —as the euphemistic phrase goes—for Tim, according to his lights, loved her.

"You're my Flo," he would say, "and one of these days I'm going to marry you. You might as well be

reconciled to that. But I don't want to marry you until I can be a good husband to you. That's not just yet. I have a few oats still to sow, my darling. Then I want to settle down to a good job and you and a thousand kids and only three of them may be daughters. They have to look like you so that some other man gets a break some time. Okay?"

And Florence weakly, and knowing it made no sense though it had the ring of music, would say, "Okay."

And she would kiss him again and go make the dinner.

This was the man she was going to meet now.

She had fled him. Absolutely fled him. She didn't want him waiting at the hospital entrance every evening, and she thought she wanted what is commonly known as time to think it over. So she shipped on the *Gloriana* when she heard there was an opening for a nurse.

So instead of waiting for her at the hospital, Tim would religiously be at dockside as the *Gloriana* eased into her home port. A red rose in his hand, of course. In this case wangled from one of the pier's florists. "You wouldn't want me to meet my girl empty-handed, would you?" she could imagine him pleading. "And sure you can spare one small, single rose for a man in love."

Though once when he had struck it rich—rich, that is, for Tim—he had greeted her with a dozen chrysanthemums and, although touched, she couldn't help but think how many hamburgers that represented.

There had been a note in her cabin when she came aboard this trip: "I shall, for the time being, be in Lifeboat 63 on the port side. I shall be warm and comfortable though perhaps a thermos of coffee—preferably Irish coffee, which I have explained to you is coffee laced with Irish whisky and cream, but in this case you can skip the cream—would be welcome. We have

never been in Bermuda together before, and I thought we shouldn't miss the opportunity. I would have come legitimately as a passenger, but you told me nurses couldn't see passengers unless they were sick, and I don't intend to be. And besides, I didn't have the money to buy a passage. But I'll be in Lifeboat 63, you can trust me, and bring me the thermos and the sweet taste of your lips. Faithfully yours, Tim."

Faithfully, she thought. Why do women always fall in love with the wrong man? Yet faithful Tim was, though irresponsible. Anyhow she was going up to Lifeboat 63 with a thermos of hot soup, not Irish coffee.

There is something about a ship.

Few writers have captured it, though many have tried.

It is the mistress of every man aboard and the lover of every woman. And each knows the ship in a different way.

The captain thinks it is his ship and, of course, by maritime law it is. But that guy down there by the fantail thinks it is his, too, and has his valid reasons. The ship is a trustworthy person so far as sailing the seas and fighting storms is concerned, but she is a fickle wanton to the crew. To each of them—and, indeed, often to the regular passengers—she whispers, "I am yours and yours alone."

Florence Knight felt that as she made her way, her thermos clutched in a hand hidden by her nurse's cape, along the now somewhat swaying decks of the *Gloriana.* She was bound for her idiotic, stowaway suitor and Lifeboat 63.

She knew unerringly where Lifeboat 63 was located.

Florence Knight, nurse and member of the crew, knew her ship.

It was dark on deck. A few stars lighted up a sky that

looked foreboding. The bulbs lighting this almost topmost deck were dim.

Florence looked about her. She saw nobody around. She knocked on the side of the lifeboat. "I am here, my darling," said a voice familiar to her as a figure loomed from behind a stanchion on the deck. "It got mighty uncomfortable in there, and I was able to sneak out without anyone's seeing me. I just had to stop lying down and stand on my own two feet. Should have come first class, my dearest. These lifeboats ain't exactly like Pullman cars."

"Tim," said Florence, "you're a fool. Why did you do this?"

"We've never been to Bermuda together."

"Well, we've never been to Egypt either. You're just going to get me in trouble."

"And how can I get you into trouble? And shouldn't the wife of an Irishman be in trouble anyhow, and you are going to be my wife. You can't get in trouble—you didn't even know I was on the ship, and besides I won't be caught."

"You *will* be caught, Tim," Florence said, sad and patient. "This ship is carefully patrolled. Even I can see that that lifeboat has been tampered with. No stowaway gets away with it. You'll end up in the brig, and you can't see Bermuda from the brig, though it's not a bad brig—air-conditioned like the rest of the ship. You can at least tell your friends when you get turned back ashore that you were in an air-conditioned jail."

"Now, Florence, my Flo, stop that nagging and give me my dollop of Irish. This tropical cruise hasn't turned tropical yet."

"Here it is," said Nurse Knight, handing him the thermos, "and it isn't Irish. It's good hot soup. Tim, turn yourself in. You'll be more comfortable, dear, and

CHAPTER 4

Cathy was in a dark-red dress, so dark as to be almost black, the kind of dress of which salesgirls say, "It's a perfect cocktail dress, but if you get persuaded to go out for dinner, it's a perfect dinner dress, too." She had thought it right for her first dinner at sea. She was waiting for Alan Richards in the smoking room.

She amused herself watching the other passengers. Most of them were jolly, elderly couples, old hands, it appeared, at cruises and sea voyages and many of them familiar with the *Gloriana,* for there was a good deal of

back-slapping of the stewards and how-are-you-old-boy's. There was also a sprinkling of lean, young college boys, obviously on vacation, and Cathy didn't mind the glances they shot at her.

In fact, one of young men came over to her table and said, "Pardon me, miss. But if you are alone, we'd surely like to have you join us."

Ashore this would be just a pickup, but at sea it is simple courtesy and camaraderie. She crumpled him with a dazzling smile and a soft, "I'm sorry, I'm waiting for someone."

The lad grinned. He was freckled, crewcut, of course. Princeton, Cathy guessed. "Maybe some other time?"

"Oh, surely some other time."

The little encounter pleased her. These lads would be a good buffer if Alan Richards got out of hand, and also, she thought and smiled, she might even see Freckles sooner than he thought should he become sick, though she didn't know yet whether Dr. Crowther was accepting her offer.

"Save those smiles for me," said Alan, appearing from nowhere, elegant in a dark-blue business suit and bow tie.

"A girl always smiles when somebody tries to pick her up," Cathy said, feeling content because after all it *was* a sort of pickup, "I got the sweetest note ever," she added and handed it to Alan. Alan took it without reading it.

"There'll be no pickups on this ship," he said pleasantly, "You're my girl, and you're to remember it. Now have you really decided where you want to eat?"

"I wish to be at the doctor's table. Not at your fancy one."

"Steward," Alan said promptly, "two Martinis and please cancel my table in the restaurant. Miss Jerrold and I will be dining with the doctor."

So confident, so experienced, thought Cathy.

Alan read the note:

The captain asked me to deliver these flowers. His card is in them. I am your busboy, Jim. I'm the dope who ran into your aunt with all that luggage. I want you to know how sorry I am, because Nurse Jerrold is a great lady. I want you to know that if there's anything I can do for you, I want to do it. Just ask the operator for Jim, your busboy on main deck, and I'll be right over whether I'm on duty or not. I am very sorry for the accident, but the doctor tells me she is coming along okay and that is good news. Please call on me any time.

Your busboy,
Jim (Bellagio)

"Yes," said Alan, sipping his Martini and looking at the people in the room, redolent now with the scent of perfume, alcohol and tobacco—an amalgam typical of all the smoking rooms of all the luxury liners in the world. "That's a nice note. This is a nice ship. It wasn't his fault altogether, I gather."

"It was one of those accidents. No one was to blame —or, if there is blame, then each must share it so it comes out even."

"You a philosopher as well as a beautiful girl?" Alan mocked kindly.

"Certainly. I'm a nurse. A nurse is always a philosopher."

"Well, then, philosopher, have you decided that your true course is to marry me?"

"Alan, stop it. Don't spoil this trip. If you insist, I'll leave you and join that Princeton man over there. He invited me."

"I saw him. Will you excuse me a moment?"

Alan, assured and elegant, went over to Freckles' table and asked him something. They both laughed, and Alan slapped him cordially on the back.

"Yale." He grinned when he returned.

Cathy grinned, too, and in time they went down to the main dining room and the doctor's table.

The dining room was a babble of sound. The doctor's table was almost directly beneath a balcony which lodged an orchestra consisting of a small upright piano, a violoncello and a violin, and they were playing, of all things, the "Meditation" from *Thaïs.*

There were hundreds of people, it seemed to Cathy, and they were all chattering loudly in order to be heard over the music. She and Alan were escorted to the doctor's table.

There were three men at the table—the doctors Crowther and Jones and Turo Green. They rose when Cathy and Alan approached. Simultaneously the orchestra stopped playing, and it made for a strange, dramatic silence. For some reason all eyes turned toward the table and the radiant figure in dark red who was to sit there.

The captain, whose habit it was—indeed, whose duty it was—to observe everything that went on on his ship, noticed this scene. "Gracious," he said, suiting his language to the dowager seated to his right, a sister-in-law of the chairman of the board, "do you suppose this trip will cause a shipboard romance for our Doctor Crowther? He usually doesn't come down for our first dinner out. Lovely woman, don't you think?"

The dowager snapped her lorgnette and peered at Cathy with the crinkled, disapproving eyes of a woman who, even at eighty-one, had never permitted anyone to be younger or more attractive than she. "Yes, she's charming," the dowager said and somehow made the

word sound like the most denigrating adjective in the language.

At the doctor's table Milton Crowther was making introductions. "Mr. Arthur Green, his wife will be with us shortly, Dr. Llewellyn Jones, my valued assistant. Dr. Jones usually dines in another room, but I especially asked him to be with us this evening. You see, one of our nurses met with an accident and could not serve on this trip. Miss Jerrold, who is a registered nurse, has volunteered to help out. This is in the best tradition of nursing and also of the sea. I want to thank you for your offer, and I thought your table mates would like to know of it."

Blushing slightly, Cathy said, "Doctor Crowther, I am so happy. I really did want to help out and doing so makes this trip much more fun and memorable to me."

To this Dr. Crowther, immensely satisfied, replied, "Then we must make sure your trip is memorable and fun. I shall put you on duty from midnight till four starting tomorrow. I shall introduce you to personnel and facilities later this evening. You will lead an ambivalent existence. For four hours you'll be a nurse and for the rest, a passenger. If you yourself should become sick between twelve and four," he added with heavy humor, "you shall have to take care of yourself."

It had worked precisely as he had hoped. He had not discussed with the captain the possibility of taking Cathy on as a voluntary part-time nurse. But she *was* Mary Jerrold's niece, and he was sure the captain would not oppose the arrangement.

So now Doctor Crowther would have the pleasure of seeing Miss Jerrold alone, or comparatively alone, at least for four hours of every night. Dr. Crowther expected to be up and about from midnight till four.

The doctor's table on this trip seated six. He placed

Cathy at his left and next to her, Turo. Vinnie would be at his right and then Alan. Llewellyn Jones sat opposite him.

Turo thought, *I have been faithful to you, Vinnie, after my fashion. I am a toy to you when you have grown to woman's estate—and estates you have—but perhaps you should have put toys behind you. I am an ornament to you, Vinnie, like one of the bangles on your charm bracelet. But let's face it—the day must come. This is a girl I must not lose. Italians know, Vinnie; they know at sight. This must be the next Mrs. Turo Green, not of Texas but of a villa up in the hills above Florence and a palazzo in Rome in the winter. I shall do you no harm, Vinnie, nor cause you upset, but I must have this girl. When you make money, as you have taught me—make money, say, in cotton—you deal in futures. I am dealing in a future, Vinnie.*

Turo found himself sad and ashamed that these thoughts had surged through him, but he could not help it. The doctors had told him that Vinnie was not exactly in a critical condition but that at any moment—that he must watch over her carefully. All the time the doctors, Texas doctors, said this they looked at him with contempt.

He had kept his part of the bargain, damn them, but one day, he knew, Vinnie would go, and he would not remain celibate. Latins are realistic, he thought. Unlike Americans. And never had he seen a girl who excited him as did Cathy. If he did not do something now, he might lose her forever.

She took a cigarette from her purse, and he was quick to offer her a light. "It must be boring," he said.

"What?"

"Well, the doctor says you are a nurse. Doesn't everybody say they'd like to be sick and have you take care of them?"

"Not really," said Cathy. "I've just graduated, as a matter of fact. But any girl likes a compliment like that."

"I'm going to be awfully sick, Miss Jerrold. Between twelve and four."

"I'll take care of you." Cathy smiled. "As part of my duty." She rather liked him. He was good-looking and amusing and flirtatious. She didn't mind flirtations. But Alan, across the table, was looking very dark and glowering. And somehow that prospect was not unpleasing either.

Llewellyn Jones thought, *I have changed, completely changed my idea of what my wife will look like. She is going to have violet eyes and an oval face, and light golden hair will fall to her shoulders. She will have a soft voice and a smile that is almost a grin, and she shall have pink lips. And I am nuts. That red dress, so dark as to be almost black, probably cost more than I could earn my first entire year in Nantucket. Still this girl is a nurse. Who knows? Perhaps she might like Nantucket. Perhaps she would like to be a doctor's wife—even mine. Anyhow, I must find out more about her. I must see her and try. Doctors are supposed to be pretty cynical and not fall in love at first sight. A wrong diagnosis. I think I fell in love with her when first I saw her in the smoking room and didn't even know who she was. And she's a nurse! And Nurse Jerrold's niece. That's good, because Nurse Jerrold likes me. But this one here, right at this table, is the Nurse Jerrold I want to be with.*

So there sat Cathy, the catalyst, the element which changes others and does not itself change. Cathy, serenely beautiful and glowing in her dark-red dress, unconscious that at her table were four men who because of the mere sight of her were deciding to alter their plans

and their mode of living. A complicated situation, at best, and potentially a dangerous one.

The orchestra was now doing its bit with the *My Fair Lady* music, and everyone was speaking louder in order to be heard. Waiters were running around everywhere serving the fancy dishes listed on menus as large as the original copy of the Declaration of Independence, and here and there in the large sea-green room plumes of fire spurted from chafing dishes.

Then Cathy heard another sound which at first she took to be some unnecessary tinkling embellishment dreamed up by the orchestra. Dr. Crowther had risen and was shaking Vinnie Green's hand. The jangling was caused by what appeared to be myriad charm bracelets.

She looked flushed and unwell, the doctor thought, and her eyes were too bright, as if she had been drinking. He might have trouble with this passenger, he thought uncomfortably. He introduced her to Cathy, Alan and Dr. Jones.

Vinnie looked like a ship in full sail. She was clad in a flaring bright-red cocktail dress, an outsize voile scarf of the same color furled about her shoulders. She sat down, beaming happily.

She called a waiter who sped to her side. "This party's on me," she said. "Champagne for everybody. Make it two bottles for now. The best."

"I'll get the wine steward right away."

"Nuts to the wine steward. Get us the champagne. I'll see the wine steward later."

The waiter retreated as if from something dangerous.

"My dear Mrs. Green," said Doctor Crowther. "Do you think you should? We should take it easy on the first night out. And—"

"Oh, I know all about that. That old sawbones back in Texas is like a mother hen. I knew he'd written you,

but I'm thirsty and this is our first night. Anyhow I've had Sustagen. We celebrate."

The waiter reappeared as if by magic, followed by the wine steward. The waiter was carrying two buckets of ice from which, periscope-like, protruded the black-green, gold-tipped necks of the champagne bottles.

"You sure these are the best?" Vinnie said to the steward.

"The best, madam."

"Pour on, Macduff, and devil take the hindmost." Her energy was incredible. The others stared at her in mesmerized silence, a faint distaste shading Turo's countenance.

"Dearie," she said, this time addressing Cathy, "a few summers ago I was down in the south of France and do you know who I met? Somerset Maugham. That's who. We got along fine, and he said he found me 'refreshing,' and I should call him Willie. Imagine that! Well, anyway, to show I valued his friendship I got hold of a copy of his book *Of Human Bondage* because they told me that was the famous one. Had it flown over to me from Texas and then found out I could have bought it right there in town. But anyhow I like to patronize home industries.

"Well, Willie—because I got around to calling him that—said I should have read some of his short stories instead of that long book, and I guess he was right at that. But I plowed through it, and I liked it. But somewhere in there he said—you know the hero was a window dresser for a while, but I don't think we'd have used him at Neiman-Marcus—that all reds go together. That's the kind of thing a woman remembers, and though I never had the nerve to say so to Willie, I think he was nuts.

"What made me think of all this, dearie," she rattled on, "was that you're in red and I'm in red—and it's

pretty funny at that to find blondes in red—but this time that writer was right, ha, ha. Of course, your red is so dark it's almost black, so maybe it doesn't count. But we don't clash on our first night out, and anyway what woman could clash with you? You're one of the best-looking girls I've ever seen. Pity you're not from Texas."

"What makes you think I'm not from Texas?" Cathy smiled.

"Well, you let me do all the talking. Texans don't do that."

Cathy smiled. She liked this outgoing woman. But she surmised—her nurse's trained eye had spotted it—that she was not well. She must ask Dr. Crowther. Or Llewellyn Jones, who, she had noticed, had hardly taken his eyes off her own self. This pleased her for, indeed, he seemed a pleasant man. She had thought so the first time she saw him walking through the smoking room, the caduceus on his sleeve.

She was glad she had heeded her aunt's advice and not called off the trip. For it would be fun. Fun as a passenger and also from the reward of helping out as a nurse. A ship's nurse. Where anything might happen. A nurse on a ship is like a nurse in a city—but where a city has hospitals and staffs, a ship's staff is a skeleton staff.

Cathy was romanticizing—her frequent habit. The fact was that seasickness, which any stewardess could handle, and mashed fingers were the most general problems. There could be an appendectomy. Or a childbirth. But not often on a liner as swift as the *Gloriana.*

Still there was Vinnie Green, drinking her third glass of champagne and saying, "I want to drink a toast to these two doctors. All my life I've been surrounded by doctors or oil-well operators. May they all toast in hell. But don't get me wrong, I love 'em. Drink up, dearies. . . ."

The dishes were still clattering; the orchestra had now gone into *Guys and Dolls*. It was dessert time, and demitasses were appearing at tables, and people were beginning to leave.

A youngster, smart in dark-blue trousers and a white mess jacket, gave a slip of paper to the captain. He read it and smiled.

"We have them now and then," he said to his table. "Somehow I expected at least one on this trip, and I was not disappointed. A stowaway."

To the messenger he said, "Tell the doctor. I'll have him at my quarters at 0900 tomorrow."

The doctor did not smile but frowned when he got the message. It would be his duty to investigate the stowaway, and he had intended spending the time showing Cathy the ship and her forthcoming chores. Now he would have to turn her over to Llewellyn Jones—he could not delegate the examination of the intruder. "We have an added passenger aboard," he said to the table. "A stowaway. I shall be calling upon him after dinner."

They were all interested. Cathy, of course, was thrilled. A stowaway! It sounded romantic—like an MGM movie. He might be carrying some dread contagious disease, and she would be the nurse and cure the patient, and—since it was an MGM movie—she would marry him. That brought her back to reality. She would have to see him first. "What will you do, Doctor?" she asked.

"I'll pay his passage if he's a good man," screamed Vinnie, who had had more champagne than was good for her, "but if he's not, let's keelhaul him."

"What's keelhauling?" Cathy asked.

"Oh, you tie ropes on him and throw him over one side of the ship and haul him under the bottom to the other side and bring him up. I saw it in an Alan Ladd

movie. It's supposed to kill you, but of course it didn't kill Alan Ladd."

"You shouldn't talk like that," said Doctor Crowther rather primly but properly.

"But what will you do?" Cathy asked again.

"It isn't as romantic as an Alan Ladd movie," he said. "I shall examine him, give a thorough physical, have him bathed and shaved probably. If it is possible, I shall give him some work to do around my office, provided it doesn't interfere with anybody else. Otherwise, it'll be the brig for him. And the authorities when we return to New York.

"Dr. Jones," he went on with a wry smile that was directed at Cathy, not Llewellyn, "you will please escort Miss Jerrold over the ship, show her the hospital—she already knows my office and clinic—and tell her about our routine, et cetera. Twelve to four and she'll stand watch in my office. Arrange for uniforms by the way. I'll check with you after I've seen our new passenger."

"I know who he is, by the way," said Turo, enjoying the stunned effect he created.

Vinnie was the first to recover. "That Turo, he sure gets around." She chuckled.

"You know him?" asked Dr. Crowther in his calmest, most professional manner.

"Well, not socially," Turo smiled. "But I couldn't help overhearing a conversation on one of the top decks near the lifeboat where he was hidden."

"What did he say? What was he like?" Cathy was excited.

Turo grinned conspiratorially at her but instead of answering continued speaking to the doctor. "You imply that he falls under your jurisdiction. Well, he's already a part of your organization, so to speak."

The doctor rewarded him with a bleak smile. "What do you mean?"

"Seems," Turo said, "he shipped aboard because he's the boy friend of one of your nurses. Also, he's never been to Bermuda."

"Well, I'll be," murmured Milton Crowther. Then, frowning, he asked, "Was it your impression that she had any part in this antic?"

"Quite the contrary. He evidently sent her a letter which she didn't receive until she came aboard. Told her where he was, and I happened to be there when she met him. She bawled him out, was very distressed. She brought him a thermos of soup."

"Very interesting. I'm relieved she wasn't in on the plot. It could cause her trouble. He should have thought of that."

"He didn't want soup. He wanted Irish whisky."

"Good nurse."

"Turo, you shouldn't have told that story," Vinnie suddenly stormed. "Can't you ever keep your big mouth shut? You may have put that poor girl in trouble. Nobody need ever have known."

Turo looked mildly abashed. But the doctor came to his rescue. "Can you describe the nurse, Mr. Green."

"No. It was dark, but she was a blonde."

"That would be Nurse Knight. No, Mrs. Green, your husband did the right thing. I have known Nurse Knight a long time. She would have told me of her own accord. If only to ask us to make his brig stay as comfortable as possible. Well, I guess I'd better go and see our amorous stowaway."

Llewellyn Jones rose, too. His eyes twinkling, he said, "Miss Jerrold, would you have time to accompany me now?"

It was an impersonal, polite request, yet Cathy felt a trace of intimacy and flushed slightly as she accepted.

Alan scowled at her, but she ignored it. He remembered with what interest she had looked at Dr. Jones as he strode through the smoking room earlier that evening. The least Jones could do, Alan thought, was to have asked him along. He must have surmised that he and Cathy were friends.

Ordinarily Alan would have had no hesitancy in asking to join them—so what? He'd like to see the ship, too. But there was something official about this. Cathy surely had become at least semiofficial, and Dr. Jones was an officer of the ship. A civilian doesn't ask an officer to accompany him on his rounds—he waits to be invited. And Dr. Jones didn't invite him.

The corridors seemed endless to Cathy; they seemed to stretch the entire length of the huge ship. There were doors to cabins to the left of them and to the right—*Oh, port and starboard it should be,* Cathy thought.

The ship, swaying gently like a nurse rocking her baby, creaked. This great modern instrument creaked like an old closet door in a country cottage. It was comforting to her. Cathy realized that the ship was itself like a hospital—as concerned with cleanliness as is a hospital.

She remembered from other trips on other ships and from her brief journey on this one that there was never a moment when you didn't see someone scrubbing, swabbing, cleaning.

The thought of Vinnie Green and her ulcers troubled her momentarily. She was day-dreaming, as was her wont, happily, proud to be walking down those long, long corridors toward the ship's hospital with the nice and friendly doctor, Llewellyn Jones.

And then another of those waves that came from nowhere slapped the side of the ship like a giant hand.

The ship lurched violently. Above, where Alan was sulkily sipping a *framboise,* chairs that were not moored slithered across the floor, drinks were spilled, everybody tittered happily and nervously. Below, a seaman who had neglected to fasten the canvas trellis, which was there to protect him, fell out of his upper bunk and fractured a wrist. Another job for the doctors.

In the passageway where Lew and Cathy were walking, Cathy was propelled right against Lew Jones who caught her in his arms. Automatically, instinctively, unthinkingly, he kissed her. And she, to her surprise, as instinctively and unthinkingly responded.

The boat straightened and so did they.

Cathy found herself blushing. *I am becoming a wanton,* she thought. *This is the second time today I have been kissed, and each time I have enjoyed it.* Then she noticed that Dr. Jones was blushing, too. It was endearing.

"Miss Jerrold," he said with a stammer of embarrassment, "I am sorry. I apologize. It just happened. There you were all of a sudden in my arms, and I just . . ."

"Let's just pretend it never happened." She smiled. "But under the circumstances—or even without these particular circumstances—I think I'd like you to call me Cathy. Miss Jerrold sounds sort of formidable."

"My name's Lew, Cathy."

"Okay, Lew."

"Except, I'm sorry, when you're on duty. It has to be Doctor Jones then."

"Yes, Doctor," she said, and then in sudden, warm friendship they continued along the passageway to the hospital.

But Lew Jones was thinking, *Let's just pretend it never happened, she said. But, no, we are going to just pretend nothing of the sort. This girl is going to be a*

doctor's wife on Nantucket, if I can do anything about it.

"Do you know Nantucket, Miss Jerrold, I mean, Cathy?"

"Oh, yes, and I love it." The image of the lovely, flat island swam before her eyes; the purple moors; the sudden fogs that came rolling in like waves of smoke; the lovely red and white lighthouse at Siasconset; the bright, bright blue of the sea when the day was sparkling and gold; the sunsets and dawns and the ever changing days.

"Yes, I love it," she repeated. "Why do you ask? Is that your home?"

"Yes," he said, "that's where I live, and there is my home. I'm giving up this job after a little while—I just wanted to be at sea for a time—and then I'm going back to Nantucket and be one of the island doctors and marry and have kids."

It was almost a proposal. Cathy recognized it but ignored it. She found herself pleased, however. The wife of a doctor on lovely, romantic Nantucket . . .

And Lew knew she had understood. "Here we are," he said, and they entered the hospital.

There were two hospital assistants there, and Dr. Jones introduced them to Cathy. "Anything doing?" he asked.

"Nothing much, Doctor. Glad to have you aboard, miss," the assistant added with an appreciative grin. "Don't spend all your nursing time in the doctor's office. Come on down here and see us some time."

"I'll be glad to if I can."

"Let's have it understood right now that I won't allow you to be alone with these wolves." Llewellyn Jones was having a splendid time—he felt he had made an impression upon this lovely girl, and he was positive he was in love with her.

It was a miniature of the hospitals Cathy knew. It had

an operating table. It had an X-ray room, and the clean glass cabinets were there holding the precise, clean instruments. Next to it was what Cathy thought of as a combination recovery and convalescent room—four beds, immaculately made and waiting for patients they hoped never to receive. For no one likes sickness at sea.

And then the telephone rang. "I told you so," said one of the assistants, then speaking into the receiver. "Send him over. I'll put a splint on him."

"That was Brown, on the upper deck," he said to Dr. Jones. "Accident prone. Hurt his wrist when the wave hit. I'll fix him up and report to you. Last trip he hurt his ankle. I think he doesn't like to work. By the way, sir, we have some inoculations coming up for the crew. Any instructions?"

"I'd like them all done before Bermuda. Good night. Call me if anything else happens. And if I should allow Miss Jerrold to come and see you, please behave properly."

"Please don't ask that of us, Doctor." The assistant grinned.

Lew Jones then took her away from the hospital saying, "I'm going to find Florence Knight and get you fixed up for uniforms. She's about your size, though from a purely clinical point of view, I think you would fit any uniform better."

"That is unkind."

"I didn't mean it that way. I'm sorry. I just meant—you are wonderfully attractive."

Cathy was pleased but thought there was no answer to the statement and made none. "Speaking of Nurse Knight," Dr. Jones went on, "would you like to see her boy friend in the brig? It is proper that I, too, call upon him there."

"I certainly would not," said Cathy. "It would be

like peering at something in the zoo. I sort of like what he did anyhow."

If Cathy was pleased at the backhanded compliment Dr. Jones had paid her, he was more so at her response. She had the right instincts—one didn't go to look at people in the brig like "something in the zoo." What a wonderful wife she would make. For a doctor. On Nantucket.

CHAPTER 5

0900

The captain's quarters.

He had decided to have the meeting in his office.

Present were Tim O'Leary, Dr. Crowther and Nurse Florence Knight.

"Young man," said the captain, "we don't like stowaways, and although I don't think you are, they are sometimes dangerous. I shall probably keep you in the brig for the rest of this trip. You won't enjoy it too much."

"Mister Captain," said Tim, trying his most obvious fake Irish charm but being sincere as far as Florence was concerned, "I want to tell you that Florence never knew I was coming aboard. I hope this will not get her into any trouble."

"It will not. We have already spoken to her, and she obviously knew nothing of this silly venture of yours."

"Captain, sir," said Florence Knight, "couldn't Tim do some work on the ship? He's a good worker when he puts his mind to it."

"No, he could not, Nurse Knight. I have a full crew on this ship, and each is paid to do his duty. To allow O'Leary to take a job would be to deprive somebody else of his. Such a person might not object to such an arrangement." He smiled at this. "But it would be in violation of my agreement with the crew. If O'Leary had such an irresistible desire to see Bermuda, he should have taken the necessary steps and signed on as a regular member. There are certified seamen ashore who are without work. What would they think if somebody who had stowed away were given a job they may have wanted? I appreciate your suggestion made under circumstances which I believe I understand, but the answer has to be no."

"Doctor," he said, turning to Milton Crowther," he's in good physical shape, you said?"

"Perfect, sir. I gather from a lengthy conversation with him and Nurse Knight that he has an allergy to steady employment. That can turn out to be as painful as an allergy to pollen."

"Well, Mr. O'Leary," the captain said, "you might ponder over the doctor's words. You will have time."

"Captain?" It was Florence Knight again. "I haven't the money aboard, but I have it in the bank at home. May I pay for his passage?"

"No. I admire your devotion to this man, but I think a little time in the brig might make him more worthy of you. Besides, I cannot obviously allow a member of my crew to pay the passage of a stowaway. I hope, O'Leary, that this escapade will be your last. We are very fond of Nurse Knight, and we don't want her wasting her time on an irresponsible man."

There was a knock on the door, and an orderly was admitted.

"A Mister Green to see you, sir. Says it has something to do with the stowaway."

Turo Green walked into the quarters, elegant in a green silk jacket and with the oil well cuff links gleaming in the French cuffs of his Italian shirt.

He greeted the captain suavely, smiled at the rest of the group. "Sir, my wife and I have been discussing the case of this young man. We are touched by his impetuosity and by his desire to see Bermuda with his beloved. We feel he meant no harm—that he has perhaps been punished enough for his youthful folly. I am, in other words, offering to pay his passage."

The captain shook his head in amazement.

"You're quite a young man," he said to Tim, a smile on his lips though his eyes were steely. "Everybody seems to want to pay your passage."

The cabin was silent. Even Tim for once seemed abashed.

"Mr. Green," the captain went on, "I think you should know that I have just refused an offer from a member of my crew to pay for this man's passage. Properly, I believe. But you are a passenger, and you present another case. Have you thoroughly discussed this matter with Mrs. Green? I may tell you that my own inclination is to let him stay in the brig."

"You might call it quixotism."

"That it is. Well, there is no rule that I know of that

says I cannot accept your generous offer. I could refuse it, of course, but I wouldn't want you telling all of Texas that the *Gloriana* has a hardhearted captain. I'll tell the purser to place the prisoner in tourist class and bill you."

"Oh, no," said Turo quickly. "We want to do it up the right way. Surely there's a first-class cabin available."

The captain again shook his head. "I surely see now why they talk about the luck of the Irish. Yes, there are several first-class accommodations available. I'll tell the purser.

"And now as for you, Mr. O'Leary. You are now a paid-up passenger and as such entitled to all the courtesies we can offer you. I must remind you, however, that I am still the master of this ship and that I am the law. Any unseemly actions on your part and back you go to the brig. I will particularly remind you of the rule which says that nurses must not fraternize with passengers. I hope you will do nothing to jeopardize Nurse Knight's excellent record. If Nurse Knight gets shore leave when we are in Bermuda, you may see her, but hands off, if you'll pardon the expression, while we are under way.

"And by the way, Mr. O'Leary, what do you propose to do about clothes? I gather you didn't bring much luggage aboard."

"I've thought of that, Captain," said Turo. "We're about the same size. I can lend him what he needs."

The captain smiled and threw up his hands.

"Well, Nurse and gentlemen, I guess that concludes our interview. I'll telephone the purser and then I'll go up on the bridge. I expect I'll find things less bewildering there."

They filed out silently.

In the passageway Nurse Knight said, "Mr. Green, I

can never thank you enough." She threw a fleeting smile at Tim and fled.

Dr. Crowther murmured, "Interesting item for the log. Not unprecedented though. Usually they're college boys and their families crash through for them. You go to college, son?"

Tim almost replied, "Of hard knocks," for he was not above such corn, but the moment did not seem to call for even that meager levity. He simply said, "No, sir."

Dr. Crowther preceded them down the passageway.

"Well, my friend," said Turo, "let's go see the purser and get straightened away."

"I don't know how to thank you. I'll pay you back, you know."

"Oh, yes," Turo said. "I know."

Why did it sound sinister?

It was now eleven o'clock in the morning. The weather had turned bright but windy. The storm, despite those few haphazard waves, had not materialized. There was nothing but deep-blue ocean stretching toward the horizon and capriciously flecked with whitecaps.

It was a gorgeous day, and the ship knifed swiftly and confidently through the gently tossing waters. Known to everybody, of course, was the fact that the ship was going at nowhere near her capability—to do so would have made the trip far too short.

Cathy was on one of the wind-blown upper decks wrapped up in a plaid blanket, a Basque beret guarding her golden hair. Lying next to her on another deck chair was Alan Richards, pensively smoking a cigarette.

They were silent—just looking at the sky and the sea. There is intimacy when there is silence between a man and a woman, and Alan liked the feeling. He also no-

ticed that Cathy was faintly smiling and that pleased him, too.

He would have been less pleased had he known what caused her amusement. In her purse was a radiogram from her aunt Mary which read: HAVE LEARNED ALAN RICHARDS ON BOARD BE WITH YOU. DISAPPROVE. BE CAREFUL. AM GETTING ALONG SWIMMINGLY EVEN WITHOUT BERMUDA. LOVE.

Cathy was composing her reply which was to read something like—NO SHOALS IN SIGHT. RICHARDS WELL IN HAND. DO NOT WORRY AND GET WELL.

She glanced at Alan and smiled again.

Peace, it's wonderful, thought Alan. *She's coming around.*

Had Alan truly diagnosed his feelings about Cathy, as might have a psychiatrist and as indeed Cathy herself had, he would have realized that what was really spurring him onward in his suit for Cathy's hand was not herself but the fact that she had declared she was inaccessible to him. It was the chase that mattered to Alan, and he did not like to lose.

Nor did Turo, who at this moment blandly accosted them. "Ah," he said, "how nice to see my tablemates! May I sit with you for a moment?"

"Certainly," said Cathy, noticing with a touch of impishness that Alan was annoyed at the intrusion. "Do you know you are the hero of the boat? We are proud to have a hero chat with us."

"A hero? How pleasant. I am not often a hero. Once when I was a little boy in Italy, I was in church and a small plaster Madonna toppled from a pedestal, and I caught her in my arms and saved her from breaking. I was a hero then, and I was given a huge meal as a reward, but since I have come to the United States and become a citizen, I have never been a hero. So why am I a hero now?"

"Everybody on the ship knows that you volunteered to pay the fare for the stowaway, and we all think it romantic and generous of you."

"Ah, well, I did have romance in mind. But not heroism. Still—thank you. By the way, Miss Jerrold—or may I not call you Cathy—would you honor me by having cocktails this evening, say at six thirty in the smoking room?"

Cathy had been around. "I'd love to join you and Mrs. Green," she said.

"I cannot guarantee the presence of Mrs. Green. She has not been feeling up to snuff lately. But if she can be there, of course, she will be, and in that case I shall naturally invite Mr. Richards who seems to be glowering at me. If I am alone, I would not want to share the pleasure of your company. You understand surely, Mr. Richards, and you, Miss Jerrold—I mean, Cathy?"

It was pretty deft. It was pretty obvious.

Cathy rather distantly answered, "I'd love to, Mr. Green. My cocktail may consist of a ginger ale, for tonight I do my first duty as a volunteer nurse. But I don't go on until midnight. So maybe I can cheat legitimately."

Turo said, "You must call me Turo."

Alan Richards said, "It's a nice invitation, Turo, but did you know that Miss Jerrold and I are engaged?"

Cathy said, "We are nothing of the sort. And this is no lovers' spat. At six thirty in the smoking room—with or without Mrs. Green, though I hope she'll be there. I like her very much."

"I'm glad. She's a remarkable woman. And now I shall leave you. I hope we shall be four, but if Vinnie feels she doesn't want to make it, I hold to cocktails *à deux*. All's fair in love and war and, these times, even in peace. Surely you agree, Alan, since Miss Jerrold—Cathy, I mean—has declared you are not engaged?"

"You appear to be married. I am not," said Alan. His irritation was quite intense because he felt Turo was outmaneuvering him.

"Marriage," Turo pontificated as if he were quoting from La Rochefoucauld, "does not mean that one must forever close one's eyes to a beautiful girl. Vinnie will altogether approve of the date I have made with Cathy, and I assure you, Mr. Richards, if that is what is bothering you, I know and observe all the bounds of propriety. Perhaps I shall see you both at luncheon? Good-by and thanks."

Airily he went off. "He's too smooth, that boy," Alan said. "Watch out for him. What would your Aunt Mary think of him?"

"She would approve of him no more than she does of you. But take it easy, Alan. A girl doesn't get seduced in the smoking room of the *Gloriana*. Anyway Mrs. Green will be there, you'll see. And, therefore, you will be also. Mrs. Green is not the kind of woman who lets a young husband like Turo far from her sight."

"You are a fool," Alan stormed angrily and rose from his deck chair and disappeared around the deck.

One deck below, a glass-enclosed one, Dr. Crowther was balancing a cup of bouillon on his knee and talking to Vinnie Green. She was lying on a deck chair looking slightly peaked, with a book of Maugham's short stories, which she had found in the library, lying unopened on her lap.

"Mrs. Green," he said, "I would like to speak to you seriously for a moment."

"I don't like people to speak to me seriously," she replied moodily, "and besides my name is Vinnie. You're Milton, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Milt?"

"Rarely. Sometimes in the Navy."

"I have a cousin named Milton. We call him Milt. I've also got a Homer and a Virgil. You see, before my old man struck it rich, we didn't have much education and the family thought throwing those classical names around would sort of give us class. By the time the old man made it, most of us were too old for what you call formal education."

Dr. Crowther smiled. Here was an honest, unpretentious woman. But he was worried about her. Before he was able to resume the tenor of his conversation which she had interrupted like a tornado, she again took the lead.

"Milt," she said, "if some of them called you that in the Navy, I can. Now don't get me wrong. I like that girl who's at our table. Wouldn't be surprised if you did, too—and not like I do. And, of course, so does that Alan Richards, though he seems a lightweight to me, and also, I bet, Doctor Jones. Don't blame any of you. There're some girls like that. Men just fall in love with them, and they mean no harm. If she's going to be a nurse, every patient will be in love with her—if it's a man. Not her fault. But, look, I've got an investment in my Turo. I don't mean a money investment—I mean what you might call an emotional one. I'm too old for him, I know. But if he's going to be with me, I don't want him running around."

"Mrs. Green," said Dr. Crowther, "should you be telling me this?"

"Oh, I've had so many doctors the minute I see one I talk as if I were with a psychiatrist. Anyhow, you doctors don't blab. What I really want to know is, can't she go to another table?"

"No, Mrs. Green—I mean, Vinnie—under the circumstances that's impossible. And I can't very well have you and your husband reassigned. But what makes you

think Turo is interested? Cathy Jerrold is a very proper person, very properly brought up."

"I told you I wasn't blaming her"—Vinnie was almost screaming and Dr. Crowther looked about him in alarm lest they be overheard—"but I know Turo. A woman knows, they always say. Well, they do. Particularly where a husband is concerned. I've seen Turo launch a few harmless flirtations, and I haven't minded, but I've seen the way he's been looking at this girl, and this is different. I may get off the ship and fly him home from Bermuda. And mind you, I'm still not blaming the girl. But my Turo, bless him and damn him, is weak. And he's being mighty weak just now."

"You may be imagining this, Vinnie. It's funny how a brief ship's trip accelerates things—romances, intuitions, all the rest. I think Alan Richards came aboard especially to marry Cathy Jerrold."

"Hope he does."

"You shouldn't worry yourself this way. That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I had a letter from your doctor."

"I know. Fussy old fool."

"I shouldn't say so. He said you had had an ulcerous condition, and you should be careful. Mrs. Green—Vinnie—you haven't been careful. And now you are worrying where I think no cause for worry exists. This is not sensible, and you are a sensible and reasonable woman. I wish, for one thing, you would eat foods that are more bland and take very little, if any, alcohol. I didn't want to make a thing of it our first night aboard, but in a way you are my patient. I am responsible for your well-being as I am for that of everyone aboard this ship. In a way, particularly for yours, since your doctor wrote me."

"He fusses like I told you. Look, Milt, I once had an ulcer, and I was operated on. It was a time when the

Humble Oil people were going to buy us out, and I had to handle everything. But now everything is all right, and I've had the operation, and I know I should take it easy, and I will. That doesn't mean I have to take the veil. So now if you want to talk to someone, talk to Turo, though don't worry, I will. It's almost noon. How about buying me a cocktail? It would calm me."

"No. You are impossible. Please be a good girl."

And Dr. Crowther, disturbed, left her and went to his office.

And Vinnie, who should not have, went to the smoking room. There, in no time, she picked up Freckles, the Yale man who had tried to pick up Cathy, and bought him, his companions and herself drinks. They thought she was wonderful, and her tension eased. Perhaps she was seeing ghosts.

But Turo's eyes had never left Cathy, it seemed to her. This could be the agonizing moment she feared. She *was* fifty-three and he was not yet thirty. The tension then returned.

"Another round, kids," she called. "The drinks are so cheap on ships—they don't tax them or something—you can't afford not to drink. Here's oil in your eye. . . ."

In his office on the main deck Dr. Crowther was brooding and discontented. Although he would have liked to have caught sight of Cathy, he had decided not to go to the dining room and had ordered a sandwich and a pitcher of iced tea. He was worried about Vinnie Green. She could become a problem. Fervently he hoped that nothing would happen to her on the trip. Her doctor had written about her, but perhaps he was being overcautious. Doctors always were—he was. But still . . .

He went to his files and pulled out the notes on ulcers

he had written when he was studying medicine. He liked to reread these notes on the various subjects he had studied; they gave him a sort of personal synopsis. He had at hand the proper medical books if he needed to investigate further, but his own notes—to which, over the years, he had added observations from experience—served him well. He had never operated for an ulcer. He was hoping he would not have to.

"Ulcer," he read, "begins as a psychological disorder—the individual responds badly to stress and therefore secretes too much hydrochloric acid which eats away the lining of the stomach. Apart from attempting to cure or assuage the underlying conflict situation, treatment consists of halting further erosion of the ulcer site by the use of such matter as will keep the lining of the stomach permanently coated twenty-four hours a day neutralizing the acid; and finally through the use of a drug which cuts the stimulus by way of the vagus nerve from brain to stomach. The drug we are now using is called Probanthine."

He thought fleetingly of Cathy. He took a sip of his tea. He returned to thoughts of Vinnie Green and to his notes.

"Milk coats the stomach. One of the best coatings is supplied by Sustagen, a product like mother's milk. Highly fattening."

Vinnie was fat. Plump was perhaps a more polite word.

"Ulcer cases must not smoke, drink alcohol or coffee, eat spiced foods or acids."

Vinnie smoked. She drank. Perhaps she *had* been cured and repaired. But how could he, Milton Crowther, tell, and how could he control her?

And she was under tension. He couldn't order Cathy off the ship or speak to Turo if, indeed, Turo was trying

to have some sort of affair with his part-time nurse. Perhaps it was all in Vinnie's mind.

Dully he went on reading the notes he had written, it seemed, so many years ago. "The stages of an ulcer are, first, the erosion, creating discomfort like dyspepsia and a degree of pain in the region of the diaphragm. When the erosion reaches the blood supply to the stomach, the ulcer begins bleeding. And finally—unless we have stopped the process—the stomach wall is perforated all the way through, producing hemorrhage which requires major, critical, emergency surgery called a resection, in which a section of the intestinal tract or the entire stomach must be removed and rejoined."

Dr. Crowther shuddered. Please take care, Vinnie Green, he prayed. I don't want you on my hands or my conscience.

"If surgery is not performed immediately," he went on reading as if hypnotized, "the patient may die from loss of blood or even through internal drowning. When a bleeding ulcer has developed, the condition is considered critical, and the patient is allowed no leeway in terms of behavior. With perforation, death can occur within a half hour."

He put his head in his hands and groaned. Why did these student notes sound so horrible, so ominous? He would try to keep an eye on Vinnie and surely have another talk with her. Could he also talk to Turo? Probably, but could he say that his attentions to Cathy were disturbing his wife? He thought not.

It was a delicate situation. Anyhow, Vinnie had said *she* was going to speak to Turo, and he imagined she would. Dr. Crowther sighed deeply. Problems, always problems. Even Cathy was a problem. He almost wished Cathy hadn't come on the trip. Whatever she was, she was disturbing.

That evening Vinnie and Turo had a spat, as it is commonly called. It had happened before, and in this case it was not unlikely that Turo had provoked it. It had to do with Cathy, and it was bitter.

Turo finally said, "Vinnie, you know you should not excite yourself. I'll go up to the smoking room now until you compose yourself. Will you join me there?"

"No." Vinnie had been weeping. "I'll rest for a half hour or so and then get dressed. Pick me up in an hour, and we'll go to dinner. Don't—oh, never mind."

Vinnie cried when he left.

It had to happen some day, she thought. Sincerely and with feminine logic she wished it had been somebody she could dislike. But she couldn't blame Cathy for having hair of gold and eyes of violet.

Perhaps in a way she couldn't even blame Turo. But he had made a bargain, and in Texas you kept your bargain even if it was unspoken.

"Oh, Lord," she said to herself, and it was a prayer and a cry of despair, "I've got to cheer up and tidy up. They haven't got me licked yet."

She rang for her steward and ordered a double Screwdriver—orange juice and vodka. "And you see to it that it's freshly squeezed orange juice and not juice from a can."

Turo met Cathy in the smoking room. "I am sorry if I am late. Vinnie doesn't want to join us. By the way, I was only joking when I told Alan Richards he shouldn't join us unless Vinnie was here. Do you know where I can reach him?"

"You might try his cabin."

He went to the telephone, and Cathy found herself perturbed about what was going on. Despite herself, she found herself attracted by Turo's easy grace, his obvious

joy in living, his impetuous generosity in paying for Tim O'Leary's passage. She somehow didn't think of him as a fortune hunter, although there was that obvious difference in age.

She herself had a cousin who had married a woman many years his senior, and they couldn't be happier. Some men preferred older women—insecurity or mother complex or something. She had never paid too much heed to psychiatric jargon.

She smiled as she thought how Aunt Mary would disapprove of her having cocktails alone with a married man. And anyhow at the time she had been irritated with Alan Richards' possessiveness.

And now Turo returned.

"I reached him. He'll be right up."

So everything was all right.

The men had their cocktails and Cathy her promised ginger ale. The men chatted with muted hostility, and Cathy became amused at it all, and when Turo left to pick up Vinnie, Alan escorted her to the dining room.

Vinnie was high again and flushed at dinner. She decided she wanted a curry. "I haven't had anything tasty in months. It's about time."

"As your doctor," said Milton Crowther with authority, "and I am your doctor aboard, I forbid you to. Eat bland foods."

It was certainly lack of professional tact to say this in the open, but Dr. Crowther thought it might impress Vinnie. And anyway she had made no secret of her condition.

"I'm sorry you couldn't be with us for cocktails," said Cathy, changing the subject which had caused an embarrassed silence.

"I'm sorry, too," said Vinnie somewhat coldly.

"The four of us would have had fun," Cathy said.

Now why in the world did she say that? But Vinnie smiled, seemed to grow warm again, and she directed her still lingering smile at Turo.

The orchestra continued its determined fortissimi. Everybody was having fun, but there was tension at the doctor's table. He felt it, and he didn't like it.

But Cathy did not notice it particularly. "Tonight's my first night on duty," she said to Dr. Crowther. "I'm looking forward to it."

"I'm glad, and I know you will be good. But don't expect too much work. Most of our passengers are hale and hearty when they come aboard, and those who are not"—this was another dig at Vinnie—"usually know how to take care of themselves."

The table tittered properly, the orchestra swung into the score of *On Your Toes,* and everyone chatted desultorily. Vinnie became moody again. Dinner ended.

Dr. Crowther excused himself and invited Cathy to his office for a cup of coffee and final instructions.

Alan thought that these doctors always invited Cathy to things and excluded him, but there was little he could do about it. He asked Vinnie and Turo to meet him in the smoking room, and then they might go to the movies. They were playing a new United Artists release which was supposed to be good.

Llewellyn Jones had been on duty and was not at dinner.

In his office Dr. Crowther did not tell Cathy anything she did not already know from Nurse Knight or Dr. Jones. Dr. Crowther had surmised this and the real reason he had invited Cathy was to try a few personal words with her. But he found himself mysteriously tongue-tied.

Emotions are accelerated on shipboard, and in the

span of almost forty-eight hours it seemed to him that he had fallen in and out of love. He saw the scene as if he were a third invisible person, present but unfelt.

There was Cathy, vibrant, young, beautiful, eager to live, eager to work. Her slim, young legs crossed, her bosom full but delicate, her hands crossed aristocratically upon her lap. The eyes, large, intent, serious, yet merry. And there opposite her behind his desk, nervously smoking a cigarette, his mind even now on Vinnie and wondering what she was doing in the smoking room with Alan Richards, who was obviously enamored of the girl in front of him, sat he—not balding but aging; not incompetent but not brilliant; not ambitious as should be the man whom Cathy could love; almost in despair but not quite in despair; an aging man who loved the solitude of the sea because it seemed to assuage the solitude that had so suddenly been thrust upon him.

He saw himself quite clearly from his invisible other self. It could be, he thought wryly, that he was afraid to fall in love, afraid of risking the disappointment of a refusal. He didn't know.

"What were you saying, Doctor?"

"Oh, nothing I guess you don't already know. The nurses will help you. So will I and Doctor Jones. You will have your station here. Never leave the office without letting the hospital know. We must at all times know where you are. And if you have any doubts whatsoever, telephone me, and if you cannot reach me, Doctor Jones. All calls come here first. Keep a log of them. Carefully. I doubt if you'll have any trouble. My quarters are just down the passageway, by the way. I can get here almost before you hang up, should you call me. In case you're lonely, by the way, please do."

This much, that last plaintive request, which Cathy did not understand, he allowed himself.

She rose to leave, and he, walking around his desk,

kissed her hand. He didn't know why he indulged in such an old-fashioned gesture. It could be that he was thinking it was some sort of farewell because of his reverie. It could be that he was afraid to try and kiss her lips.

CHAPTER 6

Nurse Cathy Jerrold reported promptly at a quarter to twelve. She was wearing the uniform Florence Knight had loaned her and one of her aunt's caps, to which she was entitled. The heels of her white shoes were perhaps a trifle too high for a sensible nurse, but she made a very fetching one indeed. Even Nurse Whittaker admitted it dourly to herself although she didn't like it.

"There's the log," she said coldly. "Nothing particular to watch out for. A cold on the main deck, number thirty-six, and I sent some pills and a mild sedative so

you probably won't hear from her tonight. And a man in U-fifty-six slipped and sprained his ankle, and I taped it up for him. Didn't have to bother the doctors.

"You'll find this rather boring, I think, though I suppose it was good of you to volunteer. How's your aunt?"

"I had a cable. She's coming along splendidly. She should be in shape for your next trip. I hope you don't think I'm interfering. I just wanted to be of help when you were shorthanded."

"Sure. Well, good night. Florence will relieve you at four. You sure you know the routine? Don't bother the doctors unless it's quite necessary."

And Elise Whittaker, like a breath of cold wind, swept out of the office.

I wonder why she dislikes me, thought Cathy. *Surely I'm no threat to her job.* She determined to win Elise over and then matter-of-factly put her out of her mind. She unnecessarily tidied her desk and sat down and waited for her first caller.

Nothing happened.

"Most of our passengers are hale and hearty," Dr. Crowther had said.

"You'll find this rather boring, I think—" Elise Whittaker.

But, of course, this was no hospital to which one came only when sick. This was a ship on a holiday cruise. And if she had no work, it would be good news. But still she was doing her duty to her profession and she would be at hand *should* anything go wrong.

She smiled as she thought how pleased her aunt would be. And then she heard steps in the passageway.

Instinctively she knew they were headed her way. Her first patient?

It was Tim O'Leary, looking pretty natty in the clothes borrowed from Turo. "Tim," she said, "I'm sorry the wrong nurse is on duty."

"Well, I am and I'm not. Just thought I'd drop by the doctor's office and see what was doing."

"You should be careful, Tim. You know you're not supposed to see the nurses except professionally."

"Oh, I'm fully prepared to say I have an awful stomach-ache and even prepared to take the remedy if someone should catch me."

"You are like a little boy."

And indeed he did have an impish, mischievous, little-boy look. Cathy liked this unregenerate but harmless youth and was sure that, given time, he would straighten out and make Florence Knight a good husband. And she liked Turo for having made Tim's trip possible—paying his passage, lending him clothes and money.

"Tim," she went on, "you should stay away from here. The captain and Doctor Crowther are very strict about passengers—and you are one, remember?—not seeing the nurses except professionally. You'll probably see Florence when we get to Bermuda. I'm sure they'll give her shore leave. But don't endanger your position or hers by hanging around here."

"Well, now," said Tim, "you sound like my sainted mother, except she wouldn't use so many words to get over the idea. But you, Miss Jerrold, Cathy, if I may, you are a different cup of tea. You're a nurse now, but in a little while you'll be a passenger just like me, as you said. So when you're a passenger, perhaps you'd have a stroll around the deck with me and perhaps an Irish coffee or whatever is to your liking."

"Perhaps." She smiled. "We'll see. Florence Knight might not like it."

"Oh, no, that Florence is very broad-minded—"

"I guess she has to be with you," Cathy interrupted.

"Now that's unfair. Flo and I will get married soon enough. Perhaps when we get back to New York. Per-

haps this is my final fling, and I'll find me a job and settle down."

"I hope so, Tim. Now run along. I don't want you caught here."

Pleasant, meaningless, warm. But it had passed a few moments of time. People confide in nurses; patients become like children to their nurses and expect to be mothered by them. Even if you are not a patient, you will tell a nurse—even a stranger—things you might not tell to certain members of your immediate family. It is a reward of nursing. It is a responsibility of nursing.

In this case, it was a slight thing. Tim was as transparent as a pane of glass. But he wanted to talk about himself, and in love with a nurse, to a nurse he went to unburden himself. Cathy was under no delusion that he did not know that Florence did not take over duty until 4:00 A.M. She hoped her warning to leave Florence alone would be heeded.

Then actually came a couple of calls.

A man came in with a badly mangled index finger. Caught in a door jamb, of course. Yet there were signs in all the cabins to guard against this.

Cathy bandaged him, thinking that he might well lose his nail although she didn't tell him so, and sent him down to the hospital.

The hospital called a little later. It was one of the assistants. "You did fine, Nurse Jerrold," he said gaily. "We put back the same kind of bandage you gave him, but we also treated his throat."

"What do you mean?" Cathy was perplexed.

"Oh, we gave him a pill that will help deaden the pain and make him sleep well. He's coming back here tomorrow, and I think we'll save the nail. They always look worst at first. Keep sending them down to us—it's a good idea. How are you doing up there? Any niece of Nurse Mary is a niece of ours. Good luck."

A friendly crew.

The next call was from a woman, a rich neurotic from New York. She had mislaid her medicine kit—she complained as if it were the line's fault—the ship was rocking (it was, ever so slightly) and her cabin creaking (this was possible), so could she please have a couple of "pheno's" right away as she couldn't sleep a wink and would look and feel a wreck tomorrow.

Cathy knew from her apprenticeship about this kind of patient. The *malade imaginaire* of Molière, the spoiled nuisance of many a big city. You don't get them too often in a hospital where nowadays beds are at such a premium that a faker will not be admitted. Indeed, the very lack of hospital beds in the United States and other countries may have led to a new system of recovery. Get them out—get them out safely, but get them out. Others have to come in.

"And please have them delivered right away because I have a most important appointment tomorrow. . . ."

Cathy felt stirring strongly within herself a loyalty to the line. She was sure the call was nothing but selfish —a desire to be pampered, to be served—yet every call must be answered. The boy who cried wolf was a fake. Yet the last time he cried out, he was telling truth.

So Cathy soothed the lady and called the hospital again to consult the assistant who had been so friendly and whose name, she oddly realized, she did not even know. But it was Dr. Jones who answered.

"She's very near this office, Doctor Jones," she said. "I'll gladly take her anything you say and spare you the trouble. It didn't sound too serious to me really."

Llewellyn Jones laughed. "Oh, I know that lady. She's a regular customer. I'll go soothe her and drop by and say hello. Gather you've been doing okay. Remember, you should be most happy when nothing is happening. It may be dull, but it means our charges are doing well."

In about twenty minutes he wandered into the office, at ease and grinning, sat down and lighted a cigarette.

"Good evening, Doctor Jones. By the way, is it good evening, good night or good morning?"

"It's hello. Or hi. And it's Doctor Jones all right. But remember, one minute after four o'clock it's Lew."

"I shall remember."

"I fixed our patient all right." He chuckled. "I gave her some sugar pills and told her they were an absolutely new, harmless, non-habit-forming formula. She'll sleep beautifully. Trouble is she'll probably ask me for a prescription! She's just a hypochondriac. Wants attention. Useless to put drugs into her. You logged the call, of course?"

Cathy read: "0205—Mrs. Reynolds in M-fifty-five called. Suffering from insomnia. Asked for barbiturates. Referred case to Dr. Jones who said he would handle."

"That's fine. My log will show what I did. You might add: 'Dr. Jones gave two X-thirty-six, instructed that any further complaints should be similarly treated. No pills, however, to be left with her.' X-thirty-six is our code name for sugar pills. By the way, we are to have three days in Bermuda, and I shall be ashore for one of them. Could you spare some time for me?"

"I'd be delighted to, Doctor Jones."

"Thank you, Nurse Jerrold." He grinned, and very unexpectedly he kissed her on the cheek. "That's," he said, "because I always kiss your aunt good night, so I feel the niece shouldn't be denied the privilege. And because the ship didn't lurch, it was completely premeditated. Good-by. See you ashore if not before." And he was gone.

Cathy was perplexed, titillated. She of a certainty seemed not to be lacking for beaux on this trip. Wonder what Aunt Mary would think?

There was Alan Richards whom she was dismissing,

although sometimes she feared his persuasiveness. He *was* attractive, although, partly due to the influence of her aunt, she was trying to make him into a friend rather than a suitor.

There was, most disturbingly, Turo, but Turo was—*had*—to be out. And there just might be Llewellyn Jones, the doctor from Nantucket. *Quite a popular girl I've turned into,* she thought without a trace of conceit.

She never gave a thought to Dr. Milton Crowther, who was at that moment sitting reading in his cabin and wondering whether or not to call on the nurse on duty.

A few minutes before four Florence Knight appeared to relieve her. Cathy told her about Tim's visit.

"He shouldn't have. Thank you for telling him so. But he's been behaving. What a wonderful thing for Mr. Green to do! Lord knows when Tim could get himself a trip to Bermuda. I'll marry him for better or worse when the time comes, I guess, but I'm not thinking he'll turn into a millionaire. But he'll be a steady and good man. He just has to get over his delayed adolescence. And you, dearie, how are you doing?"

"Fine, dear, just fine."

Just then Jim Bellagio, the busboy who had collided with Cathy's aunt, appeared at the door. He was carrying a laden tray. "I knew you were shifting at four, so I brought you something. Here's coffee for you, Miss Knight, and for you, Miss Jerrold, some hot chocolate. Nothing makes you sleep better."

And with a grin he put the tray on the desk and whisked away.

"He's a darling kid," said Florence. "He's got a crush on you."

"No, he hasn't. He has a guilt complex about my aunt —which he shouldn't have."

They chatted for a while in a friendly, inconsequen-

tial way, and Cathy at last went back to her cabin. Jim Bellagio was right. Hot chocolate makes you sleep wonderfully.

When she woke next morning, the sun was streaming through her porthole. Although she couldn't feel it because her air-conditioned cabin was hermetically sealed, she nonetheless acutely felt a semitropical atmosphere in the air. Far off and to port the outlines of Bermuda were already visible.

So they had three days and two nights in Bermuda. Some went fishing; some went to the Marine Museum where they could skin dive and look curiously at fish which looked as curiously back at them. There were inns and restaurants like Four Ways or Waterlot, and there were music and rum drinks.

There were beaches, bright white or pink from coral, where the merciless sun could parboil you in less than an hour. There were tennis courts and golf courses with the bright green Bermuda grass and the cedar trees struggling back from a blight.

There were shops where perfume and sweaters could be purchased much more cheaply than in the United States, forgetting, of course, that if you prorated the cost of your trip, it would all even out.

On the calm porch of the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club, Vinnie sat with the governor general. She was sipping a rum collins. Turo, with her explicit permission, was taking Cathy water skiing.

"A helluva island, Governor," said Vinnie. "It would make a good house in Texas. No offense meant, you understand? Joke."

"I know many of you Texans," the governor general said. "You are enamored of bigness. We here like our littleness. It makes a difference. But it makes us get along. We are, of course, amused that Bermuda lilies

tracted to Turo, and she knew it was idiotic and, indeed, wrong. For she also liked Vinnie—Vinnie who was so much older but who was gay and warm. *Oh, no,* she thought, *do not let me fall in love with a married man.* And she fell off her skis and had to be picked up.

Alan Richards had a day with her, taking her to the golf course and to dinner at a restaurant overlooking Hamilton Bay.

Dr. Jones had a luncheon with her, again on the bay. The white long tails flew by, and the long tails were turquoise from the reflection of the water.

"I love these semitropical waters," Dr. Jones said. "But I really love more the water of the Atlantic around my island. It makes men out of men and women out of women."

He made Turo seem soft.

Cathy was feeling as if she were approaching a moment of truth on this brief trip. There was Turo, who was out of the question. There was suddenly and possibly Llewellyn Jones, and there was also Alan Richards.

So she had three days and two nights in Bermuda, except for one shift as a nurse, and she was happy and perturbed.

Florence and Tim had a day in Bermuda, too. "I guess this is it," Tim said. "I'm settling down when we get home. I'll repay Mr. Green, and then I'm setting up a carpenter shop. I'm good with my hands. And, you know, these days of prefabrication and all a real craftsman is always in need. I'm a craftsman, don't you think?"

Florence kissed him.

"I'm a jealous wife," said Vinnie to the governor general. "I should be. I'm an old bag. Will you please order another screwdriver for me. On me."

CHAPTER 7

So this is what happened.

Slowly, so smoothly you hardly knew she was moving, the *Gloriana* moved north and homeward.

She carried a dedicated crew. She carried also a whole host of passengers who had come along for a brief period of pleasure. She had visited Bermuda where she loomed so large that she seemed even larger than the twenty-six square miles of island which actually is all there is of Bermuda.

seeing *her* again. You stop hanging around nurses. It's me who needs a nurse."

"Take it easy, dear. Take it easy," Turo said suavely. "I'll be down presently. Why don't you have the boy bring you a glass of milk. That's good for you."

"I'll have a screwdriver, and to hell with you. Now get here on the double."

"Yes, dear, I'll be with you in a moment."

"That was Vinnie," he said to Cathy as he rejoined her. "Cathy, I must speak seriously to you. This *is* serious. I want you very much. I must tell you that Vinnie is not well. The doctors tell me—she does not know it herself—that she may go any time. Cathy, this is difficult to say, but would you wait for me? I would divorce Vinnie were it not for her condition. But Vinnie is leaving me anyway, and I want to be with you."

What Turo was saying was that he wanted to eat his cake and have it, too. He would never think of divorcing Vinnie what with that inheritance coming his way. What he was also saying, to put bluntly what he phrased with subtlety, was that he wished to seduce Cathy.

But Cathy, who thought of herself as sophisticated, did not get it. She simply shook her head. "It's ghoulish," she said. "We simply have to forget this thing. Pretend it never happened. Once we're ashore, you'll forget all about me, and I'll see to it I forget about you. This is merely a shipboard romance, and shipboard romances vanish the moment the ship puts in to harbor. I think I'll go below now and start changing. I have duty tonight."

"May I see you later? Perhaps you'd take a turn around the deck with me and see the sun rise over the skyline of New York? Could I call for you around four when you go off your duty?"

"Surely you won't be up that late," said Cathy, rising and blowing him a butterfly of a farewell kiss with her

struck a permanently fastened table leg, which for a brief moment actually knocked him out.

With magnificent insouciance Tim left the room and went to his cabin. There he changed into the clothes he had worn when he came aboard and went into the purser's office and turned in his key.

"I am giving you this key, bucko," he said, "with the understanding that nobody can use it. It is mine, and I want it that way. For a whim, which I need not discuss, I wish to spend the night in the brig. That's where I spent the first part of this trip and where I wish to spend the last. May I have brig privileges, please?"

The assistant purser didn't know what to do, but since it was his duty to see that the desires of passengers, when reasonable, should always be catered to, he arranged to have the brig opened for Tim. He promised to yield the key to no man.

It was at the very last moment turning into a curious trip. Thank goodness they would soon be back on their regular transatlantic crossings where people did *not* ask to be transferred from first-class outside cabins into the brig.

It was now eleven fifty. Tim demanded and was served an Irish whisky. This was a character the like of which the *Gloriana* had never had to cope with before. But they decided to humor him. Surely it was not worth bothering the captain or his executive about. If first-class passengers chose to sleep in the brig—well, let them. Perhaps he was a writer. They were the nutty ones.

Tim drank his whisky and asked if they would call him and release him at six in the morning. This was promised.

Never had the brig had such a lordly tenant.

His nose seemed slightly out of joint, his eye was

Mrs. Green and went upon her duty. Turo was in the hospital when she called, but Dr. Jones did not so tell her.

When she knocked at Vinnie's door, there was no answer, and the door was locked. It bothered her, and she ran to the stewardess's quarters and had her open the door. Vinnie was lying on the bed. She had indeed been sick.

On the night table was a half-emptied glass of what seemed to be orange juice. The horrid thought of poison crossed Cathy's mind, for there was no doubt that Vinnie was dead.

Trembling, Cathy picked up the telephone and called Dr. Crowther. "It's Mrs. Turo Green. Come quickly, though I fear it's too late. No, he's not here."

She didn't know where Turo was—he who had prophesied this very event; he who had asked her to wait. And suddenly it was all awful, awful.

Dr. Crowther was there in no time at all. He was in uniform—he had well learned in the Navy how to get dressed quickly. He took one look at Vinnie and knew.

He sniffed the glass on the night table and said, "I think this is vodka and orange juice. Either can be fatal to an advanced ulcer case. I think Mrs. Green was in worse shape than even her physician suspected. Miss Jerrold, will you take this glass and its contents and place it on my desk in my office. Cover it, of course. I shall want it analyzed. Then please remain there. There is nothing for you to do here. I'll be speaking to you a little later. Please handle any calls that may come in in a perfectly routine manner, and tell nobody—not even the other nurses or Jones—about this death. I shall take care of that."

Cathy, tremulous and close to tears, obeyed.

Dr. Crowther rang for a steward, and it was Jim Bel-

of you at his quarters at seven tomorrow. I'm sorry, Mr. Green, but this is important."

Turo nodded. He was grim-lipped and white. He was scared. He felt like a criminal. He missed Vinnie surprisingly and enormously. Somehow he had thought she would always be there, wife and mother, to keep him out of trouble....

Alan Richards found Cathy in the doctor's office. Her eyes were red and swollen. She had obviously been crying.

"What's the matter, darling?" he asked.

"I'm not supposed to tell you. Vinnie Green is dead. And somehow I think it's my fault."

"That's nonsense. Vinnie Green was a sick woman—Doctor Crowther made that very plain. And she took no care of herself. She wasn't supposed to drink, but she did. She wasn't supposed to smoke, but she did. She was supposed to have bland foods, and she ate curries. How can you feel yourself in any way responsible?"

"You know perfectly well, Alan, that Turo flirted with me, and I admit I did not altogether discourage him. This could have, must have, caused worry to Vinnie, and worry can be fatal to an ulcer case. Am I a murderess, Alan?"

He embraced her, and sobbing, she let him take her into his arms. "Put it out of your mind. And now, darling, will you consent to marry me and give up this nursing idea which was foisted upon you by your aunt?"

"No, Alan," she said very solemnly. "No. This has absolutely decided me. I'm going to be a nurse, and I'm going to be the very best one in the profession."

Now her tears were uncontrollable.

Dr. Crowther walked into his office.

"I overheard you, Miss Jerrold," he said and fleetingly, as he spoke, came the thought that he had almost fallen

all night. Find yourself the right girl, but you don't have to be sick to see me now and then if you want."

Alan left her without a word but sweetly and not in anger, and Cathy, alone in her cabin, cried again. But she cried herself to sleep and she was, she thought, composed, as Dr. Crowther had requested, when she went to the captain's quarters at seven.

ant in his own clothes, which he had donned when he volunteered for his night in the brig.

"This is a painful occasion," the captain said, "and at the beginning I want to extend my sympathies and I am sure the sympathies of all of us to Mr. Green to whom, of course, I have spoken before.

"Now we have made an investigation concerning the death of Mrs. Green, and Dr. Crowther and I are preparing a report to submit to the authorities ashore. So I must ask you all a few questions. It is of utmost importance to know whether there was any negligence whatever involved in this case. I hope we shall find none."

The captain was a brave man. He knew if negligence was found, it might cost him his job and would surely cost Dr Crowther his. And Turo looked like a man who might sue....

But Turo read the captain's mind and said, "If I may interrupt for a minute, Captain, I am sure there was no negligence. If there was, it may well be on my part. I wish here, before witnesses, to absolve the line from any responsibility in my wife's death."

"Thank you, Mr. Green. Still I have some questions to ask."

There was an almost tangible feeling of guilt in the cabin.

"Now, Nurse Whittaker, we will begin with you. At eleven fifty you received a call from Mrs. Green. This was logged by the telephone operator and, very properly, by you. What did Mrs. Green say?"

"She said she was sick and would I send Doctor Crowther to her."

"Yet you did nothing?"

"I expected Miss Jerrold any minute. She generally reported early. Besides, Miss Jerrold knew Mrs. Green.

he decided to speak sternly, men obeyed. The line had picked him as the skipper of their flag ship with much thought. So Tim obeyed.

"I will tell you, sir. But may I tell you privately? Then if you want, I'll tell it here."

"Will you excuse me, ladies and gentlemen? I shall hear what Mr. O'Leary has to say in my quarters."

Tim told him. The captain grinned, although at the same time he contrived to look grim. "You know, Tim, I had an idea it was something of the sort. He was flirting with Cathy Jerrold, and what girl does not like flirtations? I don't think he took it seriously, although he might have. I wish, Tim, you had hit him with your right as well as your left. You'll have no trouble going ashore, by the way. I'll see to that. And also by the way, why don't you settle down and make a good husband for Nurse Knight?"

"Captain," said Tim very solemnly, "I'm going to do just that. And will you come to the wedding?"

"Yes, Tim, and good luck. I think your vacation trip to Bermuda has been good for you."

He chuckled, but his mien was stern when he returned to his office. He looked coldly at Turo and said simply, "I do not wish to go into the altercation between Mr. O'Leary and Mr. Green. A purely private affair. But, Mr. Green, I would like to ask you one question which you may decline to answer, of course. Our operator logged a call from Mrs. Green to you at eleven o'clock—you were in the smoking room. Would you care to tell us what that was about?"

Turo Green was defeated, ashamed. As if in a confessional, he told the truth. "She said she was feeling very sick. Would I come down? I said I'd be there presently."

Cathy at this moment started to sway, obviously on the verge of fainting. Lew Jones caught her and said

a person come of age. That is Cathy Jerrold. She will be a good nurse, and she will be a good wife.

The captain, who had with no irreverence likened himself to God, knew almost everything that happened on his ship.

So the strange, needle-like spires of Manhattan pierced an overcast sky, and the *Gloriana* was led into her berth.

A trip marred by a tragedy.

Yet Vinnie in her death did more than she had ever accomplished in her flighty life.

For Turo never remarried but founded and ran a public library in Dallas, Texas, and named it for his wife.

And Tim did take a job—as a salesman for a furniture company—and he was good at it. And he and Florence were married, and the captain was present.

So possibly Vinnie in her strange way was more of a catalyst than was Cathy.

Dr. Crowther completely gave up his iced tea and began to look with some interest at Nurse Whittaker. And she, too, had learned a lesson, for if a call came in three minutes before her relief showed up, she answered it.

And on the dock, after the *Gloriana* slid in . . .

There was Aunt Mary and in her arms, unaccountably sobbing, her niece, Cathy. There were passengers completely bewildered and luggage completely lost and happy chaos everywhere.

"What's the matter, darling?" Aunt Mary asked.

"I'll tell you later, dear. But it was a good trip if a sad one. I've grown up. I'm going to be a practicing nurse, Aunt Mary, and we're going this very afternoon to enroll me at Apdorpf."

Mary Jerrold was puzzled, but she was very pleased.

be with us for our next trip. Across the Atlantic this time."

Dr. Crowther sent a formal note to the Apdorpf Hospital. He had had a brief dream, but he had known from the very first that it was a dream and a dream only.

But a dream, and a good dream, came true for Cathy Jerrold and Llewellyn Jones. A year later they were married, and he did hang out his shingle on his beloved Nantucket. And she was nurse, wife and, eventually, mother.

And Vinnie Green, who never had been truly happy in life, did somehow by her death create happiness. Dr. and Mrs. Jones, Dr. Crowther and Turo himself all learned something from the shock of her going. She, the gay, silly soul, helped them. And a somewhat sad story turned out to end in happiness and content.

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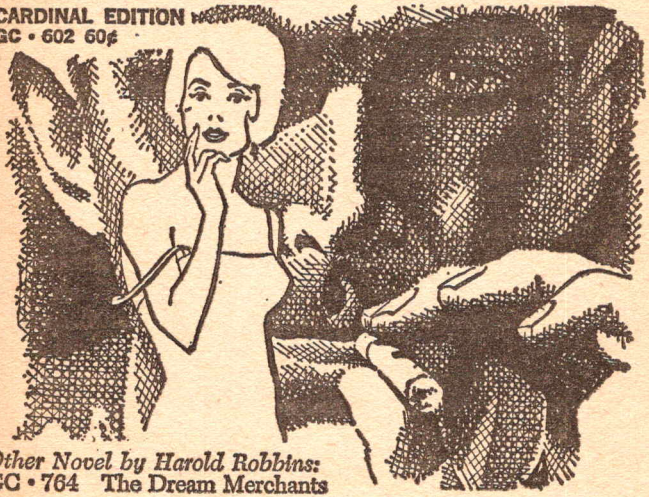

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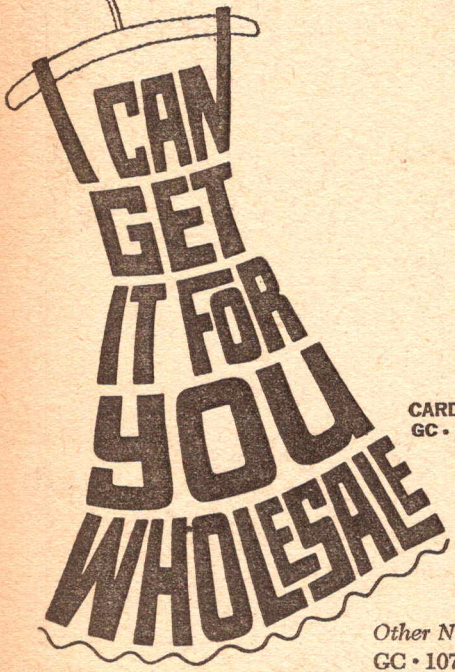

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When her aunt, the ship's senior nurse, breaks her ankle, Cathy volunteers for duty.

There seems to be more than the usual shipboard intrigue—

The ship's doctor drinks tea, secretly laced with rum, to forget painful memories.

His young assistant yearns to leave the ship to start his own practice.

Cathy was Bermuda-bound for a glorious vacation!

A stowaway—on a last fling before settling down to responsibility—is discovered.

A raucous Texas dowager drinks too much and her gigolo-husband has a roving eye.

Cathy herself is faced with an oversupply of admirers.

An innocent flirtation and sudden tragedy make Cathy realize the depth of her dedication to nursing—and where her heart is.